












*These  
Splendid Sisters*



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# *These Splendid Sisters*

Compiled by  
*JAMES JOSEPH WALSH*

WITH INTRODUCTION

*"With the wind of God in her  
vesture, proclaiming the deathless,  
ever-soaring spirit of man."—Locke*

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# Introduction

to

## These Splendid Sisters

HE death of Mother Alphonsa Lathrop, who in her younger years had been Rose Hawthorne, "the Rose of all the Hawthornes" in Nathaniel Hawthorne's family, called public attention very emphatically to the work that she had been doing for the past twenty-five years and more. After the death of her husband, George Parsons Lathrop, she established a sisterhood called the Sister Servants for the Relief of Cancer, whose principal purpose was to care for sufferers from incurable cancer who were too poor to be cared for in their home. At the time of her death there was a magnificent hospital in New York City on Jackson Street overlooking the East River and a country home at Hawthorne 25 miles north of New York in Westchester county for patients suffering from incurable cancer. Literally hundreds of cancer patients who might have died lonely in the poor house, or almost lonelier in their tenement rooms, because their circumstances were such that friends and relatives would have had to go out to work during the day and leave them by themselves, have died in these institutions surrounded by loving care and with sympathetic hearts and hands to do everything possible for them.

Mother Alphonsa is a typical example in our own day of the "Splendid Sisters" who in every century since the

beginning of Christianity have devoted themselves to the care of others and particularly those who most needed care, above all those whose afflictions were such that they had a deterrent effect upon those who tended them. Cancer patients in the latest stages of their illness are likely to demand a great deal of sacrifice of personal feeling and conquest of personal repugnance to care for them unless there are the strongest ties of affection and relationship or a supreme sense of duty. In her younger years Mother Alphonsa dreaded very much the sight of blood and had been known to almost faint at it. She had no attraction at all for the duties of a nurse and it required a good deal of self-renunciation and self-control to enable her to spend hours every day as she did for nearly thirty years in dressing the sores of cancer patients. Gradually she became accustomed to the work but always it required self-conquest to go on with it.

Many other splendid women have as Sisters done the same sort of thing in our day. We have heard of Father Damien and other "Splendid Priests" who have given themselves to the work of caring for the lepers, but comparatively few people are aware that Sisters have given themselves to this same charitable duty in many places though it probably requires more repression of personal feelings on the part of a woman to do that than it does for a man. When they wanted Sisters to nurse the lepers at Tracadie in Canada the Mother Superior conveyed the knowledge of this want to her Sisters and asked all to consider it in prayer and that she would then take the volunteers who offered themselves for the work, which of course was to be for life. When the community next met it was found that everyone had volunteered and so Mother had to make her choice of those "Splendid Sisters" that she thought would be most suitable for the life of renunciation and charity among the poor lepers.

A generation ago when we were just beginning to realize generally that tuberculosis is contagious though only mildly so and is spread by contact, Sisters of Charity here in New



York opened the first (Seton) hospital for advanced consumptive cases. They thus began that movement which in recent years by taking so many foci of infection out of crowded living quarters has done so much to lower the mortality rate from tuberculosis of the lungs and the morbidity rate from the disease. The sanatorium and tuberculosis hospital have accomplished so much that now the death rate is only one half what it used to be and we are looking forward confidently to the time when tuberculosis will be scarcely more than a negligible factor in the death rate of mankind. These Splendid Sisters faced serious possible dangers for themselves in order to do a good work for the poor sufferers from tuberculosis who needed so much to be cared for and in so doing they initiated a very striking phase of progress in the elimination of disease and the lessening of suffering among mankind.

When Mother Alphonsa began her work for incurable cancer patients too poor to secure any care for them, she had no idea the one solution of the problem would be the organization of a religious order for this special purpose. It was not long however before she realized that this would be the only way to secure the continuance of her good work. One of her favorite characters in history was St. Catherine of Siena, that wonderful woman of the fourteenth century, the most influential character of her day in Europe, who did so much for hospitals and for the solution of serious social problems in her native city of Siena. She had organized her work in connection with what is known as the Third Order of St. Dominic, Sisters who are in close relationship with the great Dominican order of Priests and of Sisters throughout the world. It is not surprising then that Rose Hawthorne Lathrop trying to solve the great social problems of a modern large city, followed in the footsteps of St. Catherine in this regard. Very probably Mother Alphonsa's recollection that St. Catherine used to faint at the sight or smell of blood as a girl and yet did not hesitate to accompany prisoners to the scaffold even to receive their heads into her apron when the ax fell, encouraged her in her work for

the cancer poor. Example lives on and makes itself felt thus more than five hundred years later.

No wonder that Algernon Swinburne for whom Siena was a focus of interest in his tour through Italy, took St. Catherine and this incident of her attendance on those to be beheaded as the subject for a poem. No wonder either that this poem is probably one of those from Swinburne's pen that will be remembered the longest and will continue to be read long after some of his daring escapades in verse along other lines will have been forgotten. We have reprinted all of the poem that has special reference to her because it represents a tribute not only to her but a poetic compliment to all these Splendid Sisters who, forgetting about themselves, took into their "sacred saving hands the sorrows of the lands, and in their virgin garments furred, the faint limbs of a wounded world." Catherine was only a dyer's daughter, her mother's twenty-fifth child. She died when she was thirty-two; she could not read until she was twenty-five nor write until she was twenty-seven, but she "accomplished a long space in a short time" and her work lives on after her. She found Siena rent with feuds and the hospital beds often crowded with those wounded on the streets,—she lived about the time of Romeo and Juliet at Verona not far away,—and Catherine took up the work of the reconciliation of families and then of feuds between cities and states and did more to prevent suffering and alleviate it in Italy than anyone else of her time or perhaps ever since.

These Splendid Sisters began their work in the Church very shortly after Constantine's edict, following the battle of the Milvian Bridge, made the Church free to accomplish its great good work of charity and humanitarianism. What has come to be considered as the first convent, on the Aventine Hill, in which the daughters of the oldest families in Rome, the Marcelli, the Fabii, the Gracchi were represented, brought together a group of women intent on doing as much good as possible for others and forgetting as far as possible about themselves. Two of these women, Eustochium and

Paula, accompanied St. Jerome when he returned from Rome toward the end of the fourth century to take up his great work of the precious version of the Scriptures that as the Vulgate has been the standard ever since. As Jerome himself was ready to confess, he would have found it extremely difficult to go on with his great work without their intelligent aid. The monastery and the convent near Jerusalem came to be centers of Christian influence and development. Fabiola came to visit them and spent two years in training there for her work of caring for the ailing poor in Rome and Marcella was in communication with them and the Splendid Sisters whom we have come to be so familiar with in modern times were already engaged in doing their wonderful work not only for the Church but for humanity.

It came to be realized, however, that the simpler forms of organization of convent life which sufficed for the accomplishment of good work in the early days of the Church when fervor was strong, would not suffice for the continuance of that good work as time went on. Older chemists used to talk about the intense activity of atoms in a nascent state, that is when just about to form new affiliations. Something like that was noted in the primitive Church but rules had to be made for similar accomplishment afterwards. This brought about the organization of religious life and the development of splendid Sisterhoods in many parts of the world.

The first of them in the West was due to the influence of St. Bridget in Ireland. Just as the later Clare of Assisi as a young woman insisted on placing herself under the direction of Francis, so Bridget in Ireland sought the direction of St. Patrick and he encouraged her in the organization of a group of women who would help in missionary efforts and do for the women what Patrick himself was doing for the men. Just as Patrick organized his great school at Armagh which became the university of that time with special arrangements for the reception and care of students from England and other foreign countries, so Bridget founded at Kildare a school for women to which before her death there

came many hundreds not only from Ireland but from abroad, and in the course of generations there were literally thousands of them who came to find the opportunity for education that had been organized by Bridget.

Strange as it may seem to us back there in the fifth century the abbess of Kildare came to be the superioress of a convent of women and also of a monastery of men situated not far away, some of whom taught in the school at Kildare. As a consequence of this example there were other dual monasteries under women's superiorship in other parts of the world. The greatest of these was that of St. Hilda at Whitby or Streoneshalh, to give it the name that it bore in her time, for Whitby is a Danish name imposed later on the town. It was in this dual institution that that greatest of poems in early English, Cædmon's story of creation, was written. If nothing else had come out of Whitby but this, that would have sufficed to confer prestige on it for all time. But out of St. Hilda's convent came the great missionary spirit that animated those noble women, St. Thecla and St. Lioba, who helped Boniface among the Germans. The apostle of the Germans soon found that it would be impossible to convert that barbarous people except through the influence of their women of whom they thought so much, and so he sent for feminine help and received it from among those trained under St. Hilda's influence in the traditions of the dual monasteries as they had been founded under St. Bridget in Ireland.

The next great development for the provision of Splendid Sisters for the world and its troubles came down in Italy under the influence of another very great woman, St. Scholastica, the sister of St. Benedict. When Benedict of Nursia found that life in the disturbed sixth century was a riot of selfishness and of mad seeking after trifles, he went out from the city, "far from the madding crowd," and proceeded to live his life in such a way that he might seek and find his soul. He drew close to the heart of nature as so many poet souls have done before and since. He devoted himself to thinking about the meaning of life and not merely



planning and scheming how to live to-day and to-morrow. After a while as has always happened when a great soul has drawn apart from the multitude, a number of young men came who wanted to share his mode of life. Then Benedict found himself compelled to organize a religious community and he proceeded to draw up for them what has since been known as the Rule of St. Benedict. This is such a wise set of regulations, so full of profound knowledge of humanity and all its ways and so well calculated to make men live happy, that it has come to be looked upon by great lawyers as one of the world's important constitutions that has been the model on which religious communities have shaped their lives fundamentally ever since. It is a very wonderful document.

When Benedict was accomplishing this for the men, his sister, St. Scholastica, who had loved her brother very deeply and did not wish to be parted from him, organized a similar community for the women of their time. This kept brother and sister apart to their sorrow, but they endured it for the sake of others. Benedictine nunneries founded by Scholastica came to be homes of peace and consolation for women who had no desire to marry and they came to be also foci of intellectual development and of education for women. Mrs. Emily James Putnam did not hesitate to say that these Benedictine nunneries of the Middle Ages afforded women a better opportunity for mental development and a better chance to exert their influence than the modern women's colleges. When she wrote this in her book on "The Lady" (Down the Ages) she had just served for fifteen years as the Dean of Barnard College, the women's department of Columbia University, New York City. No one was in a better position to know the modern woman's college than she, for she had been a pioneer in the establishment of women's colleges in our day. She had made a faithful study of the Benedictine nunneries and her conclusion was very candidly expressed. Such a thing seems quite incredible to most people, but then very few have had anything like the opportunity of Mrs. Putnam to gather the information

that would enable them to have a right to a judgment in the matter.

There were no Sisters in the English speaking countries to share the trials and the hardships of the early settlers over here in America and organize hospitals for the care of the ailing and schools for the education of children and young women in the colonies. This was not the case in France, however, and so it was not long after the foundation of Quebec before Mother Marie of the Incarnation came to lend the encouragement of her presence and the aid of her unselfishness and devotion to others for the benefit of the colonies. It has been well said of her that she is unquestionably one of the five founders of New France and her fame for posterity is quite as secure as that of Champlain, Laval, Frontenac or Talon. The little band of colonists gave a heartfelt welcome to this woman who brought no other wealth than the faith which is the inheritance of the saints. Quebec was then but a tiny outpost on the edge of an unknown, illimitable wilderness. Her first convent was a mere hovel and their first Indian school in it was broken up by a terrible attack of smallpox. The colony came near disappearing altogether under Iroquois attacks just after the middle of the seventeenth century. When the Indians attacked in force and all Quebec stood to arms Mother Marie told off her nuns to various duties, reserving for herself the most dangerous of all—the carrying of powder and shot in action. Is it any wonder they call her the “Mother of Canada”? When prosperity began to come she proved statesmanlike in quality and many of the problems of the colony were referred to her for solution. She was a woman of light and leading in both Church and State. History is full of tributes to her memory and she deserves them all.

Many are inclined to think that these wonderful works of the Splendid Sisters are out of date in our time. They represent a veritable godsend for the Middle Ages and perhaps even for the disturbed times of the seventeenth century, but for our day and for the twentieth century Sisters are a thing of the past. There is a sense of independence that

has grown even in women in the modern time that has made the prospect of an enclosed life like this seem to most people to be quite out of the question. It may be well to note then that here in America where the sense of independence is probably greater than anywhere else in the world, there are some 75,000 Sisters. I think I know about 10,000 of them personally in the sense of having lectured to them a number of times and having at least shaken hands with them, though I must confess that a great many of them look alike to me. One thing I know about them for sure and that is that they are the easiest people in the world to make laugh. They used to have a definition of a novice in the Middle Ages that was very interesting. She was "a creature who breaks crockery and spills oil and giggles." I believe that they still break crockery, though they no longer spill oil, but they waste electricity instead. They all giggle, however, on the slightest provocation and they are the happiest and most lighthearted people I know. It is not heaven on earth but it is the nearest thing to it that I come in contact with in my little journey through the world.

One of the most important of these Sisterhoods for the English speaking world was founded by a young Irishwoman less than a hundred years ago. They will not celebrate the centenary of their foundation until 1931. Her name was Catherine McAuley. Her father had had a great liking for taking care of the poor. She took after him and having been adopted by a wealthy uncle and aunt who left her their money, she devoted her fortune to organize an institution that would take care of the poor and particularly of young women and children who needed help in the large cities. Only after she had built the institution did she realize that it looked like a convent. Then, too, there came to her the thought that if her work was to continue it would have to be in the hands of a religious order, so she founded, with many misgivings because of her own lack of confidence in her worthiness to do such a thing, the Sisters of Mercy. There are now some 25,000 of them in the world and they have hospitals in Ireland, England and Scotland, Australia, the

United States and Canada, as well as in South America.

Here in America a New York woman carried away by the idea of helping the poor to find happiness in life, partly by education and partly by care for them in illness, organized a little group of Sisters just a little more than a hundred years ago and now there are 10,000 of them in this country who look to her as their foundress, the original organizer of every good work. Her maiden name was Elizabeth Bailey. In her younger days when she did not know what fate was preparing for her she married William Seton, a prosperous young New York merchant. Her father and uncle were physicians. Her uncle, Dr. Charlton, was the first one to set up a gig in New York, that is to visit his patients by driving to them. As a result he became a very fashionable physician because people liked to have the doctor's gig stop at the door. He had a good heart, however, and took excellent care of his poor patients. Elizabeth Bailey's father was a distinguished professor of anatomy, but he, too, was ready to do everything in the world for the poor. He died as the result of catching typhus fever from a group of Irish immigrants whom he nursed through the disease then so rife. No wonder that Elizabeth Bailey Seton when she was left a widow resolved to devote herself to the care of the poor.

She herself died before the community had expanded to any great extent, but like the mustard seed it grew and after a time there came foundations in New York, in New Jersey, in Cincinnati, in Halifax and now each of these mother houses numbers its members by the thousands. They have academies and colleges and orphan asylums and founding homes and hospitals, so that they care for every phase of human need. If your parents abandon you, they will care for you as a foundling. If your parents die or are unable to support you, they will care for you as an orphan. If you develop tuberculosis, they have a place for you. If you become insane, they have a series of hospitals. If you fall ill or are injured, they have the general hospitals. If you get old and there is no one else to care for you, they



have old people's homes. Mother Seton lives on in her daughters accomplishing all this good.

When the Crimean War broke out the English soldiers who were wounded as well as those who were sick found themselves without any skilled care. The neglect was so awful that wounded soldiers were placed on board a vessel on one side of the Black Sea to be carried across and their transit being delayed by storm and other difficulties, they were left untended in any way for some five or six days, literally festering in their excretions and their wounds. When the news of conditions leaked out into England, there was stormy indignation. People asked how were the French being cared for and were told that the Sisters were caring for them. One of the members of the English government asked, "Have we no Sisters?" When Florence Nightingale was put in charge of the care of the ailing and wounded in the Crimea, she took Sisters with her. Altogether some thirty Sisters served in the Crimea caring for the wounded, nursing the cholera patients, caring for typhus cases and bringing consolation to the hearts of the soldiers that changed what had almost been a hell on earth into something that smacked of home and mothers' care. What the Sisters themselves had to stand in accomplishing all this of good, they have told in their memories of the Crimea.

When the Civil War broke out in this country both sides were utterly unprepared for war, above all of so severe a character, for some of the battles were almost the worst that had taken place in history up to that time, but if possible both sides were even more unprepared to care for the large number of wounded and ailing soldiers that were very soon on the hands of both military medical departments. In this emergency and crying need, the Sisters of this country volunteered to care for the sick and the wounded to the fullest extent that they could and gave themselves to the trying labors of the work involved with wholehearted devotion. When there was question of erecting a memorial to them some sixty years after the war was over, a Congressman from Rhode Island, Mr. Kennedy, delivered an address in

which he summed up briefly what had been done by the more important orders of women during the sad years of the Civil War. That enables one to understand something of what the Sisters went through in order to accomplish their fine purpose of giving the wounded and ailing soldiers not only physical help in every way possible, but above all that new hope and consolation that means so much for recovery from disease and from wounds. Mother Angela of Notre Dame, Indiana, a daughter of the Gillespie family, a first cousin of James G. Blaine, the statesman, was the leader in the movement and her name was a benediction in the hearts of the soldiers.

During the last decade of the nineteenth century several millions of Italian immigrants found their way to this country. As a rule they were extremely poor, they had come from the back districts in Italy and were often without education, they had only their physical strength as an asset. When they were ill or injured only seldom could they be properly understood in the hospitals and it is easy to appreciate how much they had to suffer as a consequence. A daughter of the Italian nobility in 1880 had organized a little teaching community of Sisters in Italy. She proposed to send some of her Sisters into the East to do missionary work. When she applied for permission to do this, Pope Leo XIII suggested that her mission lay in exactly the opposite direction. He recommended the Americas, North and South, as a fertile field for the labors of the missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. He called her attention particularly to the needs of the Italian emigrants. Mother Cabrini came to this country and to South America, and in the course of twenty-five years there were half a dozen hospitals of theirs, schools in many places, and orphan asylums. She came to be the well-beloved mother of the Italian exiles everywhere. She traveled literally tens of thousands of miles, for she had houses in Paris and Rio de Janeiro, in Milan and Los Angeles, in New York and Seattle, two hospitals in Chicago, an orphan asylum in New Orleans and another in San Paolo, Brazil. Before her death, which took place when she was only sixty-

seven in 1917, there were some 4,000 of her Sisters doing wonderful work.

When in spite of assurances that the great folk epidemics of the older time were now a thing of the past and no longer to be feared, the awful epidemic of influenza occurred in this country in 1918, Philadelphia probably suffered more severely from it than any of our large cities. Some 12,000 people died in a little more than a month. Over 50,000 cases of the disease were reported and a great many light cases went unrecorded. Hospitals were overcrowded and doctors and nurses were played out trying to take care of patients. Emergency hospitals were opened in armories, halls, anywhere that floor space could be found. Even with that it was known that a great many people were suffering in their homes with no one to care for them. Sometimes father and mother were both down with the disease and only small children to wait on them. At times father and mother were both dead and the children were sick and scarcely knew what to do. Neighbors had their own sick to care for and had been warned not to spread contagion by visiting. Knowing the awful conditions, the archbishop of Philadelphia asked for volunteer nurses from among the Sisters. They closed their schools and 2,000 of them went out to nurse. They went into the homes of the poor as well as into the emergency hospitals and cared for the influenza patients. Fortunately but very few of them caught the disease and only one of them died, though doubtless every one of them felt that she was taking her life in her hands and made a free full offering of it when she took up the work of nursing the ailing poor.

The development of institutes for the care of the ailing poor was not reserved for the older time nor for foreign countries. A little woman in our own generation, who herself belonged to the working class and who could scarcely read and write, set about organizing a little group of women who would go out and help the poor to nurse the sick in their homes. This was the origin of the work of Mother Mary of New York, which later became the Visiting Sisters

of the Sick Poor. The work met with the greatest possible discouragement. People could not understand it, but after a time Mother Mary's own kindness of heart won people to her and at the time of her death there were some sixty Sisters with a large auxiliary to help them in their work. Besides they had an extensive property near Lakewood to which they were able to take a number of the convalescent poor during the summer for vacations. They were also in possession of estates on Long Island, where the Sisters themselves might, when they needed it, have an opportunity to regain their health. There was a house in Columbus, another on the East Side in New York, in addition to the mother house on the West Side, there was a foundation in Chicago, another in Duluth, and now Cincinnati has asked for one. What they do to make the sick poor in their homes more comfortable, relieving the anxieties of their relatives and saving the city hospitals from being overcrowded, needs to be seen to be appreciated. These Splendid Sisters are still with us.

JAMES J. WALSH



*These  
Splendid Sisters*



# St. Bridget

## *Pioneer Feminine Educator*

By JAMES J. WALSH

SO many even educated people in our time are accustomed to think that any provision of education for women, that is of any education beyond the merest rudiments, is entirely modern in origin, that the mention of a pioneer in feminine education in Ireland nearly fifteen hundred years ago must seem to them scarcely more than a supreme exaggeration of obscure historical data, probably scarcely more than traditional, induced by national super-enthusiasm. Two centuries ago feminine education had sunk to so low a level that almost the only things that were taught gentlewomen generally were catechism and needlework. When the curriculum was broadened to include the three R's, there were mutterings of apprehension lest this development of feminine intelligence might not cause serious harm to the race. Women's intellect was thought not to be very robust at best and then their duties as wives and mothers required the exercise of their hearts rather than their heads so that it seemed to our forefathers that it was a dangerous experiment to try to give them education beyond a very limited degree.

It must not be forgotten, however, that the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century represent a very low epoch in the history of social development generally. That was the lowest period in the history of nursing and hospitals were at their almost impossible worst stage in the history of humanity. It is not surprising that under the circumstances feminine edu-

cation should have been in an extremely negative phase.

To assume, however, because of that that there had never been any serious attempts or even very precious successful development of feminine education is entirely unwarranted. Taken by the idea of constant progress in humanity, many people in our day are inclined to think that if feminine education was so lacking a little more than a hundred years ago, it must have been a minus quantity two hundred years ago, utterly undreamt of five hundred years ago, and quite beyond the possibility of thought a thousand years ago. As a matter of fact there have been some very interesting periods in the history of education when women have sought and obtained the privilege of even the higher education in a great many places. This has happened over and over again and we have very definite records of the success of the educational movement for women at various times.

When Prescott wrote his History of Ferdinand and Isabella he noted with surprise that he could not conceal that there were women professors at every university in Spain. He mentions the names of some of them and the chairs they occupied. He attributes such an unheard of thing as this to Arabian influence but of course this was the Renaissance time and the influence was Italian and not Arabian. One could not expect much from the Arab Mahometans in favor of women. Prescott's surprise is easily understood because when he wrote his volumes on Ferdinand and Isabella there was scarcely a place in the United States where a woman could get any higher education than the first four elementary classes. Imagine then how breath taking it was to find women professors at universities in Spain three centuries before.

Feminine university education had existed down in Italy for centuries before this. They were teachers of many different branches of mathematics, law and anatomy

strange as that must seem, in the flourishing days of the universities in the thirteenth century. When the schools of the New Learning were founded the two great pioneer teachers, Vittorino da Feltre and Guarino of Verona insisted that young women should be given the opportunity to learn the humanities as well as the young men and as a result we have the well-known stories of the distinguished women scholars of the Renaissance in Italy. It is probable that there have been women professors at the universities and higher institutions of learning in Italy every century since the thirteenth.

The Renaissance movement spread from Italy to all the other countries in Europe and so we have traditions that are well authenticated of women scholars in all the countries. We have already noted Prescott's surprise over the results in Spain. France had a whole series of distinguished women scholars, but so also had England. Lady Jane Grey, Queen Elizabeth, Margaret More, Lady Margaret of the professorships at the English universities, Mary, Queen of Scots, though of course she was educated in France, were all distinguished women scholars. All of them knew Latin quite well, some of them knew Greek in addition and usually they knew several of the modern languages.

Even before the university period in Italy, however, when Charlemagne founded his palace school at Aix, the young women of the court were encouraged to receive the instruction of Alcuin just as well as the young men. There is even some question whether a good many of them did not profit more by Alcuin's lessons than their brothers. At least their letters to Alcuin would seem to indicate that they were more interested.

The Charlemagne movement in education represented an impetus that had come largely from the Irish monks who for several centuries had been finding their way over



on to the continent of Europe, founding schools, imparting education wherever they could and raising up groups of native scholars to carry on their work. It would not be surprising then to find that this tradition of the admission of women to opportunities for the higher education had had its origin in Ireland.

This is what is actually the case and the Irish feminist movement in education owes its origin to the foundress of an order of Sisters in the fifth century in Kildare. Her name was Bridget and under the name of St. Bridget a great many churches and shrines have been named after her not only in Ireland but also in England and France and throughout Germany and in northern Italy wherever the influence of the Irish missionaries was felt. Now there are a great many churches in her honor in the Americans, North and South, as well as in distant Australia, regions that were beyond the dreams of knowledge in her day. Her name is still in benediction among the Irish who think of her among women as only next to the Mother of the Savior and who speak reverently and faithfully of her as "our Mary of the Gaels."\* Her story

\*It is very interesting to realize in connection with the story of St. Bridget that the ancient Irish before the coming of Christianity were very devoted to a goddess Bridget who was the patron deity of poetry and wisdom. It is easy to understand what a favorite she would be among the poetically inclined Irish. Besides there was a famous lawgiver of the name of Bridget who lived just about the time of Christ and who is spoken of in concise Irish fashion as "law-wise." She was either the wife or daughter of Senchan, the Ollam or royal poet of Ulster at the court of King Conor MacNessa. Many of her laws and sayings are preserved among the Irish traditions and even some of the decisions said to be made by her in the olden time were followed as precedents by male successors learned in the law well down into historical times. It has been suggested that some of the traditions associated with the ancient goddess and the "law-wise" Bridget have been transferred to the later St. Bridget, the Mary of the Gaels, but there are so many definite traditions relating to St. Bridget herself that there was no need of trying to increase her prestige by borrowing, deliberately or indeliberately, from either the goddess or the lady of the law.

is of special interest in our time because of her place as a pioneer in the history of feminine education.

Very early in life Bridget came under the influence of St. Patrick with whose name hers was to be associated among the Irish down to our own time. From her very earliest years her most noticeable characteristic was her tender care of the poor. Indeed this profound charity prompted her to give away so much to those in need that on more than one occasion she embarrassed her mother who in the exercise of that distinctively Irish trait of hospitality sometimes found that her store of good things to eat had been so trenched upon by Bridget's liberality to the poor that there was danger of there not being enough on hand for the formal guests of the house. According to a very old legend more than once on these occasions there was a miraculous replenishment of the larder so that mother was not too much disturbed in the exercise of Irish hospitality. Bridget herself gave so much time to the poor even when scarcely more than a child that it is not surprising to find that stories resembling those told with regard to St. Elizabeth of Hungary some six centuries later are anticipated in her regard. If they are but legends they are so finely illustrative of the best of human traits—thoughtfulness for others in need—as to be a source of wonderful inspiration for others who feel the incentive to charity.

One of the old Irish traditions with regard to Bridget represents her as almost hungering and thirsting after the opportunity to do good for others, particularly those who were in want. It is expressed with Irish ampleness in the words that have come down to us. "Her desire was to satisfy the poor, to expel every hardship, to spare every miserable man."

Her position in life was such that as she grew into young womanhood her parents rather expected her to

marry and according to the custom of the time, various suitors were entertained but Bridget would have none of them. She said that she wanted to devote herself to caring for others and that she found no pleasure in social life. Just as with regard to St. Elizabeth of Hungary later some of those around her suggested that she had very poor taste thus to want to associate with the lowly rather than with her social equals, but that made no difference to Bridget. Society has always been about the same in its magnification of trivialities no matter what the stage of civilization and Bridget was one of those who realized the truth of the Scriptural expression *fascinatio nugacitatis obscurat bona*, "the witchery of trifles obscures what is worth while in life."

Strange as it may seem at that period in the world's history, Bridget insisted on finding the opportunity to live the life of the mind and the heart, of the intellect and the spirit, rather than to follow after the cult of things and feelings. Fortunately Patrick was able to help her so effectively that she was prompted to take up the task of founding a religious community in which her Irish fellow countrywomen might have the opportunity to seek happiness apart from marriage. Her parents were very much opposed to this idea of hers and all those around her who liked the beautiful kindly girl whose gentleness of disposition and care for others had endeared her to all hearts showed unmistakably that they too felt that her place was with her parents and her friends rather than in what they considered the narrow circle of a religious congregation. It has often been remarked that not infrequently it is just those who become convinced of their vocation to a religious life whose charming dispositions make them the most missed by their relatives and render separation from them seem all the harder for friends who know them well. There are

those even who do not hesitate to say that some of the others who remain in the world might well be spared for the life of the cloister. At that time, however, it was the custom for young women to take vows of chastity without entering a religious order. Accordingly, the family pleaded that Bridget might at least remain at home, doing the good among the poor that she had always accomplished and fulfilling her duties as a daughter to her parents as they grew older, without inflicting the inevitable sadness which that complete separation that would be necessitated by life in a convent would so poignantly bring to them. The reasoning is not unfamiliar. It is and has always been a favorite family objection in these cases that just as much good can be done at home. The world and its ways do not change with the centuries. Bridget was sure, however, that her religious life would be less perfect in that way and so nothing could disturb that resolution to live her life for others and for God without the disturbance of family ties and domestic duties. With the consent of St. Patrick then and under his direction, Bridget gathered round her a number of young women for the foundation of a sisterhood whose object was to be teaching and charity. The home chosen for the new institute was at Kildare on a great level tract that represents one of the best agricultural portions of Ireland. Here Bridget established what eventually developed into a college for women. Strange as it may seem to us in the modern time, not far away a monastic establishment for men grew up and this was under the jurisdiction of Bridget and of her successors, the abbesses of Kildare. Some of the teaching at Kildare was done by the monks from the neighboring monastery and the religious of both houses seem to have been present together at the services in the cathedral at least on the big festival days. Down the middle of this cathedral there was a

partition and the women worshiped on one side and the men on the other.

Dr. Douglas Hyde in his sketch of St. Bridget in his volume on the "Literary History of Ireland," emphasized the fact that before Bridget's death a regular city and a great school at Kildare, rivaling that of Armagh itself in fame, had arisen around her. From the small beginnings which she made beneath the branches of the oak tree when her first little church, Clidara, the Church of the Oak Tree, from which the name is derived, lifted itself up from the plain, there came fine developments. She planted the mustard seed and it grew. Cogitosus, her biographer, describes the great church at Kildare which succeeded that first small church. He says that it was large and lofty and possessed of many pictures as well as many hangings. It was particularly famous for its ornamental doorways. Other traditions tell us of the many beautiful things there were in the church,—artistically decorated chalices, bells, patens and shrines. It was probably the intense feeling of reverence for the name of Bridget that led to the erection and afterwards the preservation of the beautiful Round Tower which still exists there. It is the loftiest Round Tower in Ireland, over 130 feet in height and with its unusually ornamented doorway is a very striking monument of Irish feeling toward St. Bridget and her work at Kildare.

The abbey of Kildare thus founded by Bridget came to be known throughout the civilized world. With it was associated a school that rivaled those of the men throughout Ireland at this time. As a result visitors and students came from all over Ireland itself, then its reputation spread beyond the seas and women came from England and from Gaul and from Iberia, some to stay as members of the religious community, but others to take home with them the breath of the life of the mind and of the spirit



which they had breathed in so deeply at Kildare. Bridget came to be looked upon as a wonderful counselor and great ecclesiastics of the time came to see and consult the holy abbess whose name and fame were now known throughout the land.

Mrs. Emily James Putnam writing in "*The Lady*" (New York, 1909) a series of chapters on the position and influence that women have achieved down the centuries, did not hesitate to say that, "No institution of Europe has ever won for the lady the freedom and development that she enjoyed in the convent in early days. The modern college for women only feebly reproduces it, since the college for women has arisen at a time when colleges in general are under a cloud. The Lady Abbess on the other hand, was part of the two great social forces of her time, feudalism and the Church. Great spiritual rewards and great worldly prizes were alike within her grasp. She was treated as an equal by the men of her class, as is witnessed by the letters we still have from popes and emperors to abbesses. She had the stimulus of competition with men in executive capacity, in scholarship, and in artistic production, since her work was freely set before the general public; but she was relieved by the circumstances of her environment from the ceaseless competition in common life of woman with woman for the favor of the individual man. In the cloister of the great days, as on a small scale in the college for women to-day, women were judged by each other as men are everywhere judged by each other, for sterling qualities of head and heart and character."

It is no mere tradition founded on the pious exaggerations of later generations that tells the story of the influence wielded by St. Bridget. Men of all kinds but particularly the spiritually minded scholars of her time of whom there were so many came to consult her not

only because of her reputation for sanctity, that is her discernment in spiritual things, but also because of her practical common sense and her thoroughgoing administrative ability in matters monastic and her knowledge of humanity and devotion to the care of others. We have the names of not a few of the men who came thus to consult the religious mother of Ireland as she was then considered. St. Finnian, the founder of the great Monastery of Clonard, was invited by St. Bridget to give a series of discourses to her nuns on religious topics somewhat very probably in the line of what would now be called a retreat. This is by the way one of the earliest series of spiritual conferences on record. He is said to have been wonderfully impressed with what he saw at Kildare and to have declared that he hoped that each one of the nuns received half as much influence for good from what he had to say as he himself had received from what he had witnessed at Kildare.

St. Kevin of Glendalough, another of the great scholars of the time, when a young man, visited St. Bridget in order to consult her with regard to his vocation in life. In accordance with her advice he became an anchorite at first and then later the founder of the famous monastery and schools of Glendalough. Another founder of a great school, that of Sletty, which was situated in Queens County not far from the Carlow boundary, was also a visitor who came to take counsel as a young man from the "Mary of the Gaels," or "Mary of Erin" as the Irish came to call her in their love of the beauty of her character. This was St. Fiech who afterwards became a writer of great eminence in the Celtic tongue. His poem in the praise of St. Patrick is one of the classics in that dear old language. Another distinguished ecclesiastical visitor to Kildare was St. Ibar, the founder of a monastery for men on the plains of the river Liffey. He came frequently to

ask advice from the abbess of Kildare, though it should also be noted that he was of great help to her in establishing her convent. Perhaps we of the modern times are even more grateful to him for the fact that it was at his request that St. Bridget composed a beautiful hymn which is still extant.

So far from all the honor that accrued to her as the result of scholarly men coming from long distances to consult her, turning her head in any way, Bridget's favorite occupation for herself was, according to tradition, the care of poor children. While her liking for the poor and her charity led her to do everything in her power and sometimes one would think almost more than would be expected of her for those in poverty, her heart went out especially to the little ones. Doubtless the indigence of their parents was often as in our time due to their own fault. The children, however, were always innocent in their sufferings and eminently to be pitied. She realized too that in them and their proper upbringing lay the possibility of the prevention of future poverty. Influence exerted upon the little ones would make them have, in spite of an unfortunate environment, aspirations after better things, and this would surely tend to decrease the amount of poverty in the country. Her enthusiasm in the founding of schools for poor children, in which she delighted to teach herself, whenever the press of other duties would permit, is one of the traits of this saint of fifteen centuries ago that can scarcely fail to touch the heart of humanity at all times and never more than at the present moment when our care for the children of the poor is the finest feature of charity.

Bridget seems to have been deeply persuaded that agriculture and its adjuncts, dairying and the raising of cattle, were to be the most important occupations for the people of Ireland. While she was deeply interested in mental

development and education in the narrower sense of book learning, she made it a point to cultivate agriculture and to encourage its development among the tenants of her monastery lands to as great an extent as possible. Most of the lives written of her contain passages in which it is set forth that visitors to her abbey sometimes found her out in the fields taking care of the monastery herds or flocks or otherwise engaged in farm work. Usually this is set down to the humility of the saint who though superior, assigned herself these humble tasks so that she might curb her own spirit and at the same time teach others, and the lesson was very much needed in that day, the dignity of manual labor.

It seems much more likely, however, that while some of these motives prompted her there was another even more influential on her conduct. Bridget appreciated very deeply the significance that farming must have for the Irish people and therefore set a good example in the development of it. Monasteries and convents were situated out in the country places in those days, their lands often occupied by tenant farmers and the monastery had to care for them. According to an old tradition the tenants of these medieval abbey lands were the happiest of the country folk. There was a proverb to that effect: "it is good to live under the crozier," that is on the domain of and abbot or abbess. Monasteries made it a point to provide good seeds and the best of stock for their tenant farmers so that with the least labor and the least risk of loss they might cultivate their farms to the best advantage. President Goodell of the Massachusetts Agricultural College at Amherst, at the opening of that institution called attention to the fact that the monasteries were the first agricultural schools, training their tenantry to the best use of their farm land, securing the best stock, teaching them to breed it properly, providing

the best seed and improving the methods of farming.

Without doubt St. Bridget's intention when she insisted on taking her turn in caring for the monastery flocks and herds and in devoting herself to farm labor was the effect of her good example in making the Irish folk around her agriculturally inclined. It was not then so much for the sake of the personal effect on her own spirit as for the sake of the tenantry that this humble farm work was her favorite occupation. Monasteries and convents were what we have come to call in city life in modern times "settlements" among the people that accomplished sterling work of great humanitarian purpose. Around them the peasantry found help in their wants, consolation in their distress, education and uplift for their children, direction in their farming, a supply of seeds when theirs had failed, and indeed a refuge in all their necessities. Bridget's was a great pioneer work in this regard, begun even before the days when Benedictine monasteries and nunneries came to mean so much for Europe.

It is rather difficult to be assured now as to Bridget's own contributions to literature. In spite of all her responsibilities it is said that she found time for some writing. A poem in Gallic on "The Virtues of St. Patrick" is attributed to her, also some hymns.\* In prose she is said to have written a short spiritual treatise entitled "The Quiver of Divine Love." There is also an epistle to St. Aid of Degill containing instructions with regard to the religious and the spiritual life which is attributed to her. Her great mead of praise, however, is that she encouraged in others, and particularly in the women of her time who came from many countries,

\*One of the poems attributed to Bridget is the story of a blind woman to whom Bridget had restored sight. After enjoying the pleasures of vision for a very short time the old sister asked that she should be darkened again because she found so much of distraction in the sights around her that she could not give that



the love of literature and thus created an appreciative audience for the poets of her day. She certainly made the monastery of Kildare as well known for its culture as for its piety and yet all the time remained a thoroughly practical woman recognizing very clearly the value of agriculture and the place it must ever have in the lives of the Irish people. A very old tradition connects her name with the making of beautiful illuminations for books and also with Irish lace making. The first bishop of Kildare, Conlaeth, is often spoken of as Bridget's brazier because of his excellent work in brass made for the convent of Kildare under Bridget's directions.

As the result of the influence which she exerted and the prestige which she created for herself and that of Kildare, there is a well accepted tradition that her successors, the abbesses of Kildare, enjoyed distinction in the religious life of Ireland for centuries after. Archbishop Healy in his great work on "Ireland's Ancient Schools and Scholars" went so far as to say that "The lady ab-

attention to the things of the other world and the presence of God near her that was so readily possible before in her sightless condition. Katherine Tynan Hinkson has told the incident in verse in very simple and striking English verses.

"Yet she said, my sister,  
Blind me once again,  
Lest His presence in me  
Groweth less plain.  
Stars and dawn and sunset  
Keep till Paradise,  
Here His face sufficeth  
For my sightless eyes.

Oh, she said, my sister,  
Night is beautiful  
Where His face is showing  
Who was mocked as fool.  
More than star or meteor,  
More than moon or sun,  
Is the thorn-crowned forehead  
Of the Holy One."

besses of Kildare enjoyed a kind of primacy over all the nuns of Ireland and moreover were in some sense independent of episcopal jurisdiction, if indeed the bishops of Kildare were not to some extent dependent on them." Coming from a great prelate who would be perhaps inclined to be jealous of the rights and privileges of his order, this is indeed a strong expression which serves to show very clearly what a wonderful place Bridget secured for herself in the hearts and minds of the Irish people but also of the Irish ecclesiastics and of the Irish hierarchy. No wonder that her fame has come down in history for 1500 years as "the Mary of the Gaels," no wonder the Irish women and men as well, have wanted to call their girls after her and that her name has been in veneration ever since.

The more one knows of Bridget and her work and learns to appreciate its true significance interpreting it in its relations to our own efforts along similar lines, the easier it becomes to understand the enthusiastic admiration of contemporaries and succeeding generations. Their praise does not seem fulsome. Mrs. Atkinson brings her charming life of St. Bridget to a conclusion in the following eloquent and poetic sentences: "And now in regions reached by the swift-winged inspiration of the ancient race, in the New World of the West beyond the Atlantic billows, and in the New World of the South in Pacific waters, the sea-divided Gael still hold with inviolable fidelity the guardianship of her name and fame. Bridget has a niche in their churches; Bridget has a seat by their hearth. In the hearts of the Irish, at home and in exile, an echo of St. Brogan's hymn resounds——

'There are two virgins in Heaven

Who will not give me a forgetful protection—

Mary and St. Bridget.

Under the protection of both may we remain.

Great and extended is the honor paid to St. Bridget on earth.'

The influence of her protection is still felt throughout this dear land of ours. In dark and dreadful days she infused courage into the hearts of her children to suffer and if necessary yield up their lives for the faith of which she was the illustrious exponent. She guards the virtue of Ireland's daughters, so that they gained an enviable and unique name for purity of heart and modesty of demeanor throughout the civilized world. The prayer that wells up from an Irish heart to her shall never go unheeded. The power of her intercession has not lessened with the years, nor has her maternal interest in the spiritual welfare of her race diminished or grown cold and indifferent. St. Bridget is still our beloved patroness: we are still her children."

But Bridget did not confine her influence merely to her own abbey or even the immediate neighborhood of Kildare. All the lives of her time, mention that she made many journeys through the south and west of her Ireland consulting, counseling and directing the great scholars and saints of the day. Undoubtedly one of her purposes was to be sure that her school at Kildare should have whatever advantages other schools throughout Ireland had. Another was that her presence inspired many to take up the religious life and that after a visit of this kind there would be many applicants for entrance into her abbey. The rich and the poor, flocked to her, the rich bearing gifts, the poor asking for help, and very few went away without feeling that some great new power had come to them and that now they would be able to bear their ills better than before or even throw them off. We who are beginning to know how many of the ills of mankind are due to dreads and fears of various kinds that come over people and how they can be cured if only they will release their own spirits, can appreciate that many an ailing person must have gone away from Bridget better than

before, even though there were no special influences from on High to further her efforts, but the people of her generation insisted that there was something of divine aid that came through her administration.

Many writers particularly in recent years since the special study of old Irish history has flourished, even though without sympathy for Bridget's religious aspirations, have come to realize that here indeed was a very great woman who deserves all the praise that has been given her, and merits a place among the world's greatest women of all times. His Eminence, Cardinal Moran, in his life of the saint gives an extract from the work of a Protestant churchman of distinction, entitled "St. Bridget and the See of Kildare", in which the writer thus testifies to the veneration in which the name of St. Bridget was held at home and abroad: "Extraordinary veneration for the name of St. Bridget was displayed by the Irish in the Middle Ages. One writer says that the Scots, the Picts, the Irish and those who live near them, the English, put her next after the Virgin Mother of God. It is said that her feast was celebrated in every Cathedral Church from the Gersons to the German Sea for nearly a thousand years."

The place that Bridget achieved for herself in the hearts of the Irish men as well as women in her time led to the establishment of customs according to which women shared much more than could have been thought possible under Roman influences in the intellectual development and the work of the men. The fact that Bridget herself was the abbess of a religious institution with both men and women under her jurisdiction, is astonishing for our time. This custom continued, however, for centuries and spread beyond Ireland itself as is well illustrated by the instance of the abbey, convent we would call it, of Streoneshalh (Whitby) in England founded under the

Gaelic tradition. There St. Hilda was the abbess of a monastery where there were many nuns but also a certain number of monks. A very unusual circumstance was that the abbesses of Kildare, Bridget's successors for centuries after her time, seem to have been formally consulted with regard to the appointment of the bishop of Kildare. This custom did not go so far as to permit her to nominate the bishop, but the abbess apparently had the right to veto with regard to candidates whom she might deem unsuitable for the position because of the very close relations that existed between the bishopric and the abbey.

The first bishop of Kildare, Conlaeth, is usually considered to have been Bridget's own candidate for the position. As we have said, he is commonly spoken of in history as "Bridget's brazier" because he was famous as a fine worker in metals to whom Bridget had afforded the opportunity to employ his skill in the making of beautiful objects of various kinds for the abbey. According to tradition, he was also a teacher of decorative art, especially in the metals in Bridget's school at Kildare. It was here that was laid the foundation of that reputation for the making of beautiful shrines, chalices, brooches and other objects for which the Irish were so famous in succeeding centuries.

Bridget seems to have encouraged in every way the making of beautiful things. It is the tradition so well authenticated with regard to this that makes it seem very likely that when Gerald Barry, *Giraldus Cambrensis*, made his visit to Kildare, he was actually shown the very beautiful copy of the Scriptures which he tells us that he saw there and which he considered to be the most beautiful book in the world. It was thought for a time that perhaps this might have been the Book of Kells but we have no historical record or even distant hint that the Book of Kells was ever at Kildare, so it is probable that what



Gerald saw was another volume almost if not quite equally beautiful. Indeed after recent developments in Irish archeology there are not a few scholars who venture to suggest that Gerald may actually have seen at Kildare a still more handsome copy of the Scriptures than the Book of Kells, if such a thing were possible.

If Kildare really possessed a more beautiful copy of the Scriptures than the book of Kells, it is only another evidence for the wonderful work that these Irish were able to do. There is no question, however, of its having come from so early a period as Bridget's own day. She had done so much to awaken the spirit of the Irish with regard to beauty that traditions were likely to connect her name with almost anything that was to be seen in Ireland. What we know of her makes us realize very clearly that she eminently deserved such attributions and that she is undoubtedly one of the greatest women of history in the influence for good that she exerted on the Irish people and through them in succeeding generations on the rest of the civilized world. She stands beside St. Patrick in this regard, and when we recall all that the Irish in the generations after their time accomplished for Christianity and civilization throughout the rest of Europe, it is easy to understand the reverence there has been for the name of Bridget for all these fifteen centuries not only in Ireland but throughout all the rest of Europe. [From volume "The World's Debt to the Irish," Stratford Press, Boston.]

# St. Hilda

*Abbess of Streoneshalh (Whitby)*

By JAMES J. WALSH

ONE of the very precious debts of knowledge that we owe to Venerable Bede, the great Church historian of England of the eighth century, is contained in the details that he has left us with regard to Abbess Hilda. Without the information provided by his writing we would have only the vaguest hints with regard to this great woman who ruled a monastic establishment which comprised both monks and nuns and under whose patronage the first great contribution to English literature was made. She was no mere figure-head, elected to the post of abbess by complacent nuns nor placed there through political influence. The fame of her wisdom was so great that from far and near monks and bishops and other high ecclesiastics came to consult her and even royal personages journeyed long distances to have the advantage of her counsel.

No wonder that it has been said that under her rule the monastery of Streoneshalh (the town to which the Danes several centuries later gave the name Whitby) became famous. As the result of the impulse to intellectual and spiritual development that was given under Hilda's influence not less than five of the monks of Streoneshalh became bishops, among them St. Wilfrid, bishop of York, who rendered such untold service to the Anglo-Saxon Church at this critical period of its struggle with paganism.

Father Herbert Thurston, S.J., in his brief sketch of Hilda for the Catholic Encyclopedia, has dwelt particularly

on her power of administration, for before coming to Streoneshalh she had ruled a similar double monastery of monks and nuns with great success at Hertlepool. Indeed it was her success in this position which led to her being invited to the superiorship of Streoneshalh where the monastery needed to be set in order, for certain abuses had crept in. She made Streoneshalh a place of study famous for its devotion to the sacred Scriptures and for the opportunity that it afforded to women for the development of the intellectual and the spiritual life as well as of their own characters and personality.

The story of her work there is one of the great traditions of the early English Church particularly interesting for our own day because we are so little prone to think that there could by any possibility have been practical and efficient interest in education for women twelve centuries ago and more among the Anglo-Saxon people.

Like so many of the distinguished Abbesses of these early centuries, like St. Bridget herself to take but one example, Hilda came of royal lineage. She was the daughter of Hereric, the nephew of King Edwin of Northumbria. She became a convert to Christianity in the early years of her girlhood when she was yet under fifteen. Following the example of her sister, in her ardor of devotion she became a nun. She resolved at first to enter a convent at a distance from home, so as to be free from the distractions that might come to her from the nearness of relatives, and above all so as to make the complete sacrifice of worldly considerations and home ties in the religious life, but she was recalled by St. Aidan, the great Irish apostle to Midland England, who assured her that there was plenty of opportunity for her to devote herself to her own people and accomplish much good.

Probably the incident or rather set of incidents for which St. Hilda's name is best known among the scholars

and students of our generation, is the story of Cædmon, the famous author of a series of biblical poems, in which the material of Genesis, afterwards used by Milton, was first put into poetic form in the west of Europe. That story told us by the venerable Bede, who was himself a contemporary of Cædmon, as he was of St. Hilda is extremely interesting. Cædmon was attached as a laborer, perhaps what would now be called a lay brother, to the twin monasteries of Whitby, over which St. Hilda ruled as Abbess. He had received no education and his life was spent in laboring with his hands. He had often heard his fellow laborers sing with the harp in the evenings after their work was done, a custom which reveals rather interestingly a definite stage of culture among the working classes about the middle of the seventh century and contradicts much of current opinion as to popular ignorance at that time.

Once the harp was passed to him and he was asked to take his share in the entertainment of the assembled laborers by singing to them for the benefit of the company. Knowing nothing of poetry he left the room for very shame. On several other occasions this happened to him until he began to take this inevitable exhibition of his ignorance rather to heart.

In his shame-facedness he used to withdraw to the stable where, having charge of the horses of the monastery he was accustomed to sleep during the night. Here he had a dream in which, as is not uncommon with dreams, the last incident that he had been thinking about before he fell asleep recurred to him and there stood by him one in his vision who called him by name and bade him sing. His mystical visitant, however, insisted and when Cædmon said, "I cannot sing, and therefore I left the feast," replied: "Sing to me nevertheless, sing of Creation." Thereupon Cædmon, who was familiar with

Genesis because of the frequent reading of the Scriptures in the monastery out loud for the benefit of all, and who therefore knew it very well, though at this time he could neither read nor write, began to sing in praise of God verses descriptive of the creation of man which he had never heard before.

In the morning he recalled not only the incidents of the dream but the words which had come to him. Others have had dream poems and indeed a book of verses which, according to their authors, were composed in dreams would, if collected, make a rather large volume. No one, however, has ever dreamed quite so successfully, and above all, not at such length in verse as Cædmon.

The next morning Cædmon went to St. Hilda and told his story. Then at her invitation he recited for her and the scholarly men of the monastery, whom, after listening for a little while, the Abbess summoned to hear him, the verses which had come to him during the night. There could be no possible doubt that he had been inspired to sing. Whether that inspiration shall be taken in the modern sense in which the poets so often use it, or in the older sense which seemed to these good monks and their Abbess to proclaim that this lay brother had received a Divine gift must be left for modern readers to decide for themselves, according to their mental attitudes toward such events.

They were not satisfied, however, with the first sample that he had given them, but they suggested some further sacred stories as subjects for his muse and he confirmed their opinion of his inspiration by turning them into excellent verse. The Abbess Hilda then persuaded him to become a monk and thus secure opportunities for his education. His humility would scarcely permit him, but it was represented to him, he owed it to himself, to the monastery and, above all, to the inspiration which had



come to him to give just as full play as possible to his poetic abilities.

Accordingly he was taught to read and devoted himself to the biblical story which he turned into "sweet verse." Bede has told us of his long years of poetic writing and then of his holy death, so that, no wonder, he came to be honored as a saint as well as a poet and is acknowledged as such by the Church, though few who have studied the account of his great poems, or the poems themselves seem to be aware of this title of honor and veneration, which was so lovingly accorded him by the people of his own time and generation.

This was the beginning of the precious heritage of English sacred poetry, which has had its contributions in practically every century ever since. What is interesting for us here, of course, is the Abbess Hilda's connection with Cædmon and her place as the patroness of literature and education, even for the laborer of the monastery at Whitby, who showed that he had a gift for higher things. Surely this must be taken not as an exception, but as representing the custom of the time.

Only one such great poet as Cædmon could well be expected in a single generation, but there must have been many other laborers at Whitby who, showing some ability with harp and song, were accorded the opportunity to develop their talents and make themselves something more than hand workers in this great establishment. That a woman should have been an institution that meant so much for education and be so looked up to, is indeed a startling contradiction of what is so often said with regard to the absolute lack of opportunities for women to develop their intellects or exhibit their powers of administration in the times so long before our own.

This century of St. Hilda is often supposed to be one of the darkest periods, yet here is a striking testimony of

the fact that when women had in them powers of intelligence and administrative ability, opportunities for their display were not lacking, but on the contrary, were afforded with a fullness that might well be envied in our time.

St. Hilda came to be held in the following generations almost as much in veneration among the inhabitants of what we now call England as St. Bridget was among the Irish. Many churches were named after her, and as the towns grew around these churches they came to bear her name also. There are probably a dozen or more old English churches dedicated to St. Hilda on the northeast coast of England alone. She was very early looked upon as a saint and it was felt in erecting churches under her invocation that the people were raising just so many monuments in her honor.

This was a favorite mode of recognition for those who had done great good work, particularly in what we now call social service, in that olden time. Probably the finest monument ever erected to a woman is the Cathedral at Marburg in honor of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, which was after all a popular tribute of veneration in the early thirteenth century from the German citizens of Marburg, very like that given to St. Hilda some six centuries before

# St. Scholastica

## *Founder of the Franciscan Nuns*

By JAMES J. WALSH

THE exhibition held at the New York Public Library of a collection of books and other objects illustrating the history of feminine education from the early Christian centuries down to our own time, has called particular attention to certain neglected chapters in the history of the education of women. This neglect has been due to a number of causes. It began with the Renaissance when a great many people who were educated in the New Learning, the Latin and Greek classics, became quite sure that the people who had lived before them and been educated in quite a different way must have known nothing. Whenever there is a change in the basis of education there is a development of this kind. We had it in our time. It is one of the recurring phases of modernism.

The rising generation of the Renaissance invented the term Gothic by which they meant barbaric, that is, worthy only of the Goths who had rubbed out the old culture in the Middle Ages. They applied it first to the architecture of that older time but were inclined to apply its contemptuous significance to the literature and all the other modes of thinking of their medieval ancestors. We inherited the Renaissance prejudice but a change has come over the spirit of our thought of late.

Gothic architecture with its beautiful arts and crafts is now in honor once more and along with them has gradually come back a much better understanding of our medieval forefathers, but, it must be confessed that it is

only in quite recent times that there has come any proper recognition of the work of these older generations for education and particularly for feminine education.

Now we know that practically every Christian century has had either some great new development of feminine education, or witnessed the organization of some new outlet for women's energy which provided them with fine opportunities to exert their influence for the betterment of mankind, and that usually each century has seen the career of some supremely great woman whose name will never be forgotten in the annals of humanity so long at least as Christianity continues to be an influence. Any such expression would have seemed a gross exaggeration a generation or two ago, but now the careers of such women as Fabiola the Roman matron, foundress of hospitals and organized charity in the fourth century, of St. Bridget foundress in Christian education for women in the fifth, of St. Scholastica organizer of social work and education in the sixth, of St. Hilda patroness of learning in the seventh, of St. Thecla coadjutor of the missionary spread of Christian civilization throughout Germany in the eighth, of Hroswitha nun-dramatist in the tenth, of St. Margaret of Scotland, Queen and patroness of learning in the eleventh, of St. Hildegarde, abbess and writer on science in the twelfth, of St. Elizabeth, first settlement worker in the thirteenth, of St. Catherine of Siena, charity worker and literary genius in the fourteenth, to mention but a single name in each century of the ages that used to be called in ignorance "dark," though there are so many others whose names and work are familiar in succeeding centuries, Teresa, Catherine of Genoa, Angela of Merici, Lousie le Gras—all exemplify the truth of this expression.

The most interesting feature perhaps of this list is that one of the earliest of these influential women, whose

work has meant more for succeeding generations of women than probably any other among them and certainly has influenced more women in every century than any other, has left almost no details of her life. Her work speaks for her, but how it was done we know not. One or two passages of her personal career we have which serve to show how humanly affectionate she was and how she ventured successfully to appeal to Heaven on at least one occasion to bless and approve that affection by miracle. Practically all that we have with regard to St. Scholastica who did for women in the disturbed sixth century what her brother Benedict did for men, securing them a place of refuge for quiet contemplation and work they cared for, is that shortly before her death, visiting her brother who came to see her outside the walls of his monastery, she found that though she herself knew that she was near her end, her brother would not stay with her, but was insisting, according to the Benedictine rule, on returning to his monastery for the night, so she asked Heaven to keep him near her for a while longer.

The story as we have it is told in the Thirty-third of St. Gregory's Dialogues. As Gregory was himself one of the great men of the sixth century, the Pope who sent Augustine to England, the organizer of many features by which Christianity became more capable of service to the large numbers now flocking into its fold, in a word a man whose influence has endured during all the centuries since, his story may be accepted as representing the feeling of that time. According to the story as told by Pope Gregory, Scholastica used to come once a year to visit her brother. "To whom the man of God went not far from the gate to a place that did belong to the Abbey there to give her entertainment." When Scholastica felt that her end was approaching she made her way to see her brother "on a day so fair that not a cloud was to be seen



anywhere." She begged her brother to stay with her more than the few hours he usually permitted himself, but he in accordance with the rule he had laid down for others of not remaining without the Monastery gates over night, refused. The rest of the story may be told in Gregory's words.

"The sister begged her brother to stay the night, but by no persuasion would he agree unto that, saying that he might not by any means tarry all night out of h's abbey. . . . The nun receiving this denial of her brother, joining her hands together, laid them upon the table; and so, bowing down her head upon them, she made her prayers to Almighty God, and lifting her head from the table, there fell suddenly such a tempest of lightning and thundering, and such abundance of rain, that neither Venerable Bennet nor his monks that were with him, could put their head out of the door.

"Three days later Benedict beheld the soul of his sister, which was departed from her body, in the likeness of a dove, to ascend into Heaven; who rejoicing much to see her greater glory, with hymns and lauds gave thanks to Almighty God, and did impart the news of this, her death to his monks whom also he sent presently to bring her corpse to his abbey, to have it buried in that grave which he had provided for himself."

To a great many people in our time a story of this kind would apparently preclude all possibility of the characters engaged in it being likely to produce any far-reaching work, above all in education. "That sort of thing" would be dismissed as mysticism and it would be concluded that persons who credited experiences of this kind could not be very practical and that while in a credulous superstitious generation they might be looked up to as favorites of Heaven, their influence would surely not be enduring, at least not down to our enlightened time. The work of

these two, however, the brother and sister, founders of the Benedictine monks and nuns, has continued to influence mankind more deeply and constantly than probably anything else except Christianity itself. A sordid material age may forget for the moment the place that the spiritual has in life, and may need to be reminded that the perduring influences among men have been ideas and ideals, and above all faith and the things of the spirit, and not the material advances that humanity is often so proud of and so prone to think of as representing lasting monuments or human accomplishment.

The great commercial cities, Memphis and Tyre and Sidon and Carthage, were built palatially and substantially, and yet they passed away completely almost in a few centuries. An English novelist has pictured as one of his characters an American traveler in the Mediterranean coming to the realization that this Mediterranean Sea is just lined with the ruins, sometimes little more than the sites being now recognizable, of great boom cities which arose to prosperity, built themselves a magnificent domicile for their business and their wealth—and then gradually disappeared or were obliterated in the course of the advance of another people.

Some of these cities the American adds, "were beating all creation all the time just like any of our own modern cities." These material monuments of man's labor lasted for an ever so much briefer space of time than the work of the visionaries who made for the men and women of their time a refuge and a home in the midst of a troubled period. Visionaries they were in a certain literal sense of the word, dreaming their dreams and working only for the Lord above, but as John Boyle O'Reilly said, "the dreamer lives forever and the toiler dies in a day."

The ideas and the ideals and the faith of Benedict and Scholastica and Gregory lived on long after many achieve-

ments of men supposed for the time to be ever so much more enduring have disappeared. In every century the Benedictine monks and nuns have had large numbers of men and women to whom the Benedictine rule has brought the fine satisfaction of a great unselfish purpose in life, and has provided them with an opportunity for work for others that has made them always a power for good and above all for what is now called social service and for the happiness of men.

Yet as I have said of the woman who organized all this for women, so that a thousand years after her death Vittoria Colonna as a widow found her consolation in her retirement in one of her nunneries, we know nothing except this little incident told by the great Pope Gregory and the additional fact from her brother's writings, that "she was dedicated to the service of God from her infancy." When a millennium later Vittoria Colonna, the most influential woman of the Renaissance, whose power over the men and women of her time was so deep and so much for what was best, came to die, she asked to be buried in the habit of the Benedictine nuns, because, if in life her place in the world of her time had been too important for the Pope to permit her to enter the Benedictine nunnery, at least she wanted to claim her sistership with them at death and so she was buried in the little convent graveyard in their habit, and now there is no trace of where her remains lie.

During every century of the thousand years that separate St. Scholastica and Vittoria Colonna who has sometimes been spoken of as the Saint of the Renaissance, great souled women were finding their consolation, their opportunity for the exertion of the best influence that was in them, their chance for a career even in the modern sense of that word, their place of refuge for the cultivation of the spiritual and the intellectual life, in connection

with the Benedictine nunneries not only in Italy, but in France, in Spain, in Germany, in England and after the discovery of the Western world, the daughters of St. Scholastica were to find homes also in the newly discovered countries beyond the Ultima Thule of the ancients. Not only this, but the example of these Benedictine lives and the influence of their work was to bear fruit in the foundation of other institutions similar to theirs with such modifications as enabled them to fit themselves for special service for their own time and place. As a consequence of St. Scholastica's foundation there are in the United States alone some 50,000 women finding a vocation and a life work that mean not only very much for them, but for all those with whom they come in contact.

It is extremely interesting then to run over briefly even the story of some of the women who as the result of Scholastica's foundations under her brother's rules found the opportunity to exert precious influence on their time, make a career for themselves and leave a name that is undying so long as the present stage of our civilization endures. The century after St. Scholastica herself, St. Hilda, at Whitby in the Northeast of England, ruled a double monastery of monks and nuns famous ever since in history. It was to her that Cædmon, the great English poet, who so long anticipated Milton in the employment of the material of Genesis as the basis of a great poem, went with his first sketch of his great work. He said that it had come to him in a dream. Poets have always talked of being inspired. All our best thoughts at all times come to us quite unbidden. St. Hilda encouraged him to write out his vision and when he put forward the plea of his ignorance, offered him the opportunity of an education. In the distant West of Europe, within 100 years after her time St. Scholastica's institute was giving opportunities

for noble ladies to do great good work and providing a chance to rise for the poor.

In the following century the letters that passed between St. Boniface and the abbesses of England show how broad and deep were the interests of the ladies of the eighth century in the intellectual and the spiritual life. Mrs. Putnam in her book on "The Lady" suggests that "we obtain a glimpse of the culture of the Anglo-Saxon nuns by consulting the correspondence of St. Boniface, the friend of many cloistered ladies. They write to him in fluent Latin on many different subjects, one sends some hexameter verses, another sends him fifty gold pieces and an altar cloth." "He begs one of them to finish the copy of the Epistles of Peter which she had begun to write for him in letters of gold." When he wanted to assure the permanency of his work as the apostle of Germany he sent over to England and asked for religious ladies to come to him to teach the daughters of the German families. St. Thecla who came at his request represents one of the great influences of this time. Mrs. Putnam concludes: "A composite photograph of the correspondents of Boniface shows a lady as important as a man, as well educated and as economically free as a man, thoroughly understanding the politics of her time and taking a hand in them, standing solidly on her own feet."

In succeeding centuries there were women just as important as these and the Benedictine spirit and institute lived on to be a resource for women at all times. I have already told in "The Children of Providence" the stories of Hroswitha the nun dramatist and the Abbess Hildegard who wrote on science and medicine. It seems almost impossible, considering the traditional feeling in the matter that a nun of the tenth century should have written dramas, and we would surely refuse to believe it only that they have actually been preserved for us. So far as we



know they are literally the only attempts at dramatic composition from the classical period to the first rude beginnings of the mystery plays some centuries later. That Abbess Hildegarde's writings should represent the most important contribution to scientific literature for several centuries seems just as strange, yet her work was reviewed by a woman physician in a University of Paris thesis for 1900 which received the distinction of being crowned by the French Academy.

Almost contemporary with St. Hildegarde was the Abbess Herrad, the author of the "*Hortus Deliciarum*" or "*Garden of Delights*." Dr. Turner in his article on her in the Catholic Encyclopedia says that: "The text is a compendium of all the sciences studied at that time including theology. It shows a wide range of reading and when we remember that it was intended for the use of the novices of Odilienberg (the convent in which Herrad was mistress of novices before being made abbess) we are enabled to glean from it a correct idea of the state of education in the cloister schools of that age." The book is famous because it contains 366 illustrations of all sorts of subjects, especially symbolical and historical and a collection of portraits of her sisters in religion.

In the fourteenth century came Juliana of Norwich, a Benedictine nun living as a recluse in an anchorage of which traces still remain in the East part of the Church of St. Julian in Norwich. Professor Taaffe told her story and her place in the England of her time in the Children of Providence three years ago. Her book, the "*Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love*," has been published and republished many times and an edition has been issued in the twentieth century. Strange as it must seem to those who are inclined to think that because we use the word psychology so much, the last few genera-

tions must have been the discoverers of the true meaning of psychologic introspection, Juliana is still read with interest because of her marvelous psychological insight, in which she has been compared with St. Theresa. These three, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Juliana of Norwich and St. Theresa, give the best possible idea of the supreme heights of mysticism and how little that term deserves anything like the aspersions of hysterical pietism that have attached to it. For Juliana "to know self well is inevitably to know God well." In her emphatic double comparative, "God is more nearer to us than our own soul," Juliana describes herself as "a simple creature, unlettered," but then so did Shakespeare's Portia describe herself as "an unlessoned girl."

Is it any wonder then that Mrs. Putnam, herself the Dean of Barnard College for women for years and thoroughly familiar with many American Colleges for women, should yet not hesitate to declare that: "No institution in Europe has ever won for the lady the freedom of development that she enjoyed in the convent in the early days. The modern college for women only feebly reproduces it, since the college for women has arisen at a time when colleges in general are under a cloud. The lady abbess was treated as an equal by the men of her class, as is witnessed by letters we still have from popes and emperors to abbesses. She had the stimulus of competition with men in executive capacity, in scholarship and in artistic production since her work was freely set before the general public; but she was relieved by the circumstance of her environment of the ceaseless competition in common life of woman with woman for the favor of the individual man."

All this opportunity for women for a thousand years was afforded by St. Scholastica's foundation. What a little seed may grow into a great tree and how marvelous

it is that ideas, not things, count in this little world of ours. In our time we would be quite sure apparently, that if an institution was to affect mankind deeply even for a few generations, to say nothing of centuries, then it must have a magnificent foundation and a rich endowment so as to insure that its work shall be carried on. St. Scholastica's foundation was laid in the hearts and souls of the women of her time and the great rules of her brother St. Benedict coördinated individual effort into a unifying force that went on increasing in energy from generation to generation, spreading its activity from country to country until the whole world was deeply influenced by these Benedict nunneries. Nuns they were called originally, because that was an old-fashioned name for mother and these women came to be looked upon as the "mothers" of all who cared to come to them for instruction or sympathy or help in time of trial and they did a mother's work by making the house of the Lord beautiful, by their taste, their needlework, their beautiful illuminated books and made the world much more livable by the example of their lives.

I am quite sure that St. Scholastica herself had no idea of the immensity of the benefit that she was to confer on humanity and particularly on womankind. I even think that had she dreamt of it, somehow her work would have been impaired just to the degree of her self-consciousness in the matter. As it is she solved a problem for her time in a simple, beautiful way and the solution has served to solve problems ever since. All that she did was the task just before her, doing that as well as possible and leaving all the rest to Him who had inspired the beginning.

# St. Clare

## *Founder of the Franciscan Nuns*

By FRIAR THOMAS OF CELANO

**T**HIS wonderful woman, Clare (illustrious) alike in name and in deed, belonged to a family of no small luster of the city of Assisi. Having been first a fellow citizen of the Blessed Francis on earth, she afterward came to reign with him on high. Her father was a knight, and she was of knightly lineage on both sides; her family was wealthy and, after the manner of the country, owned extensive possessions. Her mother, Ortolana by name, about to bring forth a fruitful plantlet in the garden of the Church, was herself not wanting in good fruit. For although she bore the yoke of marriage and was bound by household ties, yet she devoted as much of her time as might be to the divine service and was unremitting in works of piety.

This devout woman crossed the sea with other pilgrims and, having visited those spots which the Godman hallowed by His sacred footprints, at length returned home with joy. On another occasion she went to pray at St. Michael, and with still greater devotion did she visit the shrines of the Apostles. What more need be said? By the fruit the tree is known, and the fruit is commendable in virtue of the tree. An abundance of the divine favor preceded in the foot so that a wealth of holiness might follow in the branchlet.

When finally Ortolana was with child and the time of her delivery was at hand, as she prayed earnestly before the cross in a certain church, to the end that the Crucified might bring her safely through the perils of childbirth,

she heard a voice saying to her: "Fear not, woman, for thou shalt in safety bring forth a light which will illumine the world more clearly." Taught by this oracle, Ortolana directed that the newborn infant, when born again in holy Baptism, be named Clare in the hope that the brightness of the promised light might in some way be verified after the good pleasure of the Divine Will.

Hardly had the little Clare seen the light than, fitly enough, she began to glisten with lightsomeness in the darkness of the world, and during her tender years she became resplendent by virtue of her conduct. First of all, she learned with a docile heart, the rudiments of faith from her mother's lips, and as the Spirit working within her at the same time formed her into a most pure vase, she became known as a vessel of grace, indeed. Clare gladly stretched out her hands to the poor, and from the abundance of her house she supplied the wants of many. And in order that her sacrifice might be more pleasing to God, she deprived her own little body of delicacies and, secretly sending them out by messengers, relieved the hunger of the orphans.

In this wise, mercy growing up with her, she showed a tender heart, commiserating the miseries of the miserable. Clare loved the practice of holy prayer, and so often experienced its good odor that little by little she accustomed herself to a life of seclusion. Since she had no prayer beads by telling which she might say her *Pater Noster*, she counted out her little orisons to God by means of a heap of pebbles.

When, therefore, Clare began to feel the first goads of Divine Love, she saw that the fleeting image of worldly beauty was to be spurned and, taught by the unction of the Spirit, she valued the empty things of the world according to their worthlessness. Hidden under her soft and costly garments she wore a little hair shirt, thus



dressing with the world outwardly while putting on Christ inwardly.

But when at length her family wished Clare to make a noble alliance, she in nowise acquiesced, but, feigning to postpone earthly espousals, commended her virginity to God. Such were the manifestations of Clare's virtues in her paternal home; such the first fruits of the Spirit; such the preludes of her holiness. Redolent as she was, therefore, with so great fragrance, Clare made herself known by her sweet odor, even as a vessel of aromatical spices does though it be closed. Thus, all unknown to herself, Clare began to be praised by her neighbors and, the fame of her secret acts being published, the report of her goodness was noised among the people.

Hearing of the now famous name of Francis, who, like a new man, had restored by new virtues the path of perfection forgotten in the world, Clare at once was desirous to hear and see him, being moved thereto by the Father of Spirits, whose first promptings both had followed, albeit in a different manner. And he (Francis), struck by the fair fame of so favored a maiden, was not less wishful to see her and hold converse with her, for, being wholly eager for spoils and having come to depopulate the kingdom of this world, he would fain in some way snatch this noble prey from the wicked world and restore her to her God.

Francis visited Clare and she more often visited him, so ordering the times of their visits that their holy meetings might neither become known by man nor disparaged by public rumor. For, accompanied by a single confidential companion, the girl, going forth from her paternal home in secret, frequently visited the man of God: to her his words seemed a flame and his deeds more than human. Father Francis exhorted her to contempt of the world, showing her in vivid words the barrenness

of earthly hopes and the deceitfulness of earthly beauty. He instilled into her ears the sweet espousals of Christ, persuading her to conserve the pearl of her maidenly purity for that Blessed Spouse who out of love became Man. But why multiply words?

At the entreaty of the most holy Father, who acted deftly after the manner of a most faithful bridesman, the virgin did not delay to give her consent. And forthwith a glimpse of the heavenly joys was opened up to her, the sight of which made the world itself seem of small price, the desire of which made her melt, as it were, away; the love of which made her aspire after the supernal espousals. For, glowing with celestial fire, Clare so looked down on the glory of earthly vanity that nothing of the world's applause cleaved to her affections. Dreading, moreover, the allurements of the flesh, she resolved to keep herself unspotted, desiring to make her body a temple to God alone and striving by virtue to merit espousals with the great King. Thenceforth Clare committed herself wholly to the guidance of Francis, considering him to be, after God, the director of her steps. From that time her soul depended upon his holy admonitions, and she received with a ready heart whatever he said to her of the good Jesus. She was already weary of the beauty of worldly apparel and she accounted but as dung all the things the world esteems, that she might gain Christ.

Furthermore, lest mundane dust might in the future sully the unspotted mirror of her soul, or mundane contagion corrupt Clare at such a susceptible age, the good Father hastened to lead her out of the dark world. The solemnity of Palm Sunday was drawing nigh when the girl with great fervor betook herself to the Man of God for counsel as to her retreat from the world, as to what was to be done, and how she was to do it. Father Francis

ordained that on the feast day Clare, dressed out and adorned, should come to the blessing of the palms with the rest of the people: that on the night following she should go forth from the camp and that her worldly joy be turned into mourning for the Lord's Passion.

When Sunday had come, the girl, radiant in festive array among the crowd of women, entered the church with the others. There a noteworthy presage occurred, for whereas the rest pressed forward to receive the branches, Clare through modesty remained in her place without moving, whereupon the Prelate, descending from the steps, came to her and put a palm in her hands. The following night Clare set about the accomplishment of the Saint's command, and, with some trusty companions, began her longed-for flight.

But not wishing to leave by the usual door, she broke open, with a strength that astonished herself, another one which was walled up by a mass of beams and stones. Thus leaving behind her, home, city and kindred, Clare hastened to St. Mary of the Porziuncola, where the Friars who were keeping vigil at the little altar with lighted torches received the virgin Clare. Immediately casting aside the sordidness of Babylon, she there gave a bill of divorce to the world, and forsook her various ornaments, her tresses being shorn at the hands of the Friars. Nor was it befitting that the Order of virginity to be raised up toward evening should flower elsewhere than in the sanctuary of her who, first and most worthy of all, was alone a virgin and a mother.

This is that place in which the new militia of the poor under the leadership of Francis took on its happy beginnings that it might be clearly manifest that both religions were brought forth by the Mother of Mercies in her inn. But after Clare had received the holy livery of Penance before the altar of the Blessed Mary, and after the

humble handmaid had been espoused to Christ as if by the couch of this Virgin, St. Francis straightway led her to the Church of St. Paul, to abide in that place until the Most High should provide another.

When the news had reached her heartbroken kinsfolk, they condemned the deed of the girl and her proposal, and, banding together, they ran to the spot, endeavoring to attain what they could not. They resorted to main force, to baneful counsels, to bland promises, urging Clare to withdraw from such a sorry plight, which was unworthy of her birth and unheard of in those parts. But Clare, laying hold of the altar cloths and baring her tonsured head, declared that nothing would henceforth separate her from the service of Christ.

Her courage increased as the war waged by her kindred waxed stronger; and love wounded by illtreatment gave her strength. Thus, even thus, for many days together while she bore with this obstacle in the way of the Lord and while her kinsfolk set themselves against her purpose of holiness, Clare's courage failed not, neither did her fervor diminish, but between harsh words and deeds she encouraged herself to hope, until finally her kindred, withdrawing their opposition, quieted down. After a few days' interval Clare moved to the Church of S. Angelo de Panzo, but as her mind was not fully at rest there, she at last, by the advice of Blessed Francis, removed to the Church of S. Damiano. There fastening the anchor, as it were, of her mind for good, she concerned herself no longer about a change of abode. She did not waver because of the straitness of the place nor shrink back at its loneliness.

This is that church for the repair of which St. Francis toiled so wondrously and to the priest of which he had offered money for the work of restoration. This is that church in which, while Francis was praying, a voice com-

ing down from the wood of the cross resounded, "Francis, go repair My house, which, as thou seest, is utterly destroyed."

In this little place the virgin Clare shut herself up as in a prison for the love of her Heavenly Spouse. Here hiding herself from the turmoil of the world, she confined her body so long as she lived. Building a nest in the hollow places of this wall, the dove, covered with silver, brought forth the community of the virgins of Christ, instituted a holy monastery, founded the Order of the Poor Ladies.

Here in the way of penance she wore out her body; here she sowed the seed of perfect justice; here by her own example she pointed the way to them that were to follow. In this narrow little retreat for forty-two years Clare broke the alabaster of her body with the stripes of discipline, that the house of the Church might be filled with the fragrance of her ointments. How gloriously she lived in this place will become clear if it be first narrated how many and how great were the number of the souls who came through her to Christ.

The fame of the sanctity of the virgin Clare soon spread through the neighboring provinces, so that women from every side ran to the odor of her ointments. Virgins hastened after her example to consecrate themselves to Christ; married women strove to live more chastely; the noble and the illustrious, contemning stately palaces, built for themselves narrow cloisters and deemed it a great glory to live for Christ in sackcloth and ashes. Youths in eager crowds were incited to holy conflict and were spurred on by the heroic example of the weaker sex to spurn the allurements of the flesh.

In fine, many already united in marriage bound themselves by the law of continency by mutual consent: the men passed to the Orders, the women to the monas-



teries. The mother invited the daughter to Christ, and the daughter the mother; the sister drew her sisters, and the aunt her nieces. All desired to serve Christ with equal fervor; all wished to be made partakers in this angelic life which had become renowned through Clare. Innumerable virgins, moved by the accounts of Clare, not being able to embrace the life of the Cloister, sought to live as religious without a rule in their own homes. Thus did the virgin Clare bring forth by her example such great fruits of salvation that in her would seem to be fulfilled the prophetic utterance: "Many are the children of the desolate more than of her that hath a husband."

Lest the new source of heavenly blessing which had sprung up in the vale of Spoleto should in a short time dry up, it grew, Divine Providence so disposing, into a river, so that it might make the whole City of the Church joyful. For the novelty of such things spread far and wide in the world and everywhere began to gain souls for Christ. Clare, remaining enclosed, began to enlighten the whole earth and to become renowned by the praises of all.

The fame of her virtues filled the dwellings of illustrious women; it reached the palaces of duchesses, and even the private apartments of queens. The flower of the nobility stooped to follow in her steps, and its pride of lineage was brought low by holy humility. Not a few worthy of being given in marriage to dukes and kings did severe penance, inspired by the example of Clare, and those who had married potentates took Clare as their model. Cities without number were adorned with monasteries, and even country districts and mountain places were beautified with the dwellings of this celestial institute. By the most holy example of Clare the esteem of chastity increased in the world and virginity, come to life again, began to flourish.

With these blessed flowers brought forth by Clare the Church has happily become verdant in our day, and with them she, too, asks to be surrounded, saying: "Stay me up with flowers . . . because I languish with love." But now our pen must needs revert to our subject, that it may be made known of what sort was her manner of life.

Clare, the corner-stone and noble foundation of her Order, sought from the very first to raise the edifice of all virtues upon the basis of holy humility. For she promised holy obedience to the Blessed Francis, and from this promise she never receded. During the three years that followed her conversion Clare declined the name and office of Abbess, humbly wishing to be subject rather than to be set over others, and to serve most willingly among the daughters of Christ rather than to be served. But on being urged by the Blessed Francis, she finally undertook the government of the Ladies.

Because of assuming this office fear and not haughtiness arose in her heart, nor was her freedom augmented, but rather diminished. For the more she was seen to be raised above others by any kind of governance, the more lowly, the more fit to serve, and the less worthy of esteem she was in her own eyes.

She never shrank from any menial duty, so that she often poured water on the hands of the Sisters, assisted those who were infirm and served those who were eating. It was with great reluctance that she ever commanded anything. She did a thing of her own accord, preferring to perform a task herself than to impose it on the Sisters. With that noble spirit of hers Clare herself waited upon the Sisters who were ill and washed them, neither shirking what was disagreeable nor dreading what was disgusting. She often washed the feet of the servants returning from without, and having washed their feet,

she was wont to kiss them. She was once washing the feet of a certain servant and, being about to kiss them, the servant, not brooking so great humility, withdrew her foot, thus striking her lady in the face. But Clare, gently grasping the servant's foot again, imprinted a fervent kiss upon the sole of it.

Her poverty in regard to all things included that poverty of spirit which is true humility. And first of all, in the very beginning of her conversation, Clare caused the paternal inheritance which had come to her to be sold and, reserving nothing of the price for herself, gave it all to the poor. Thus, having left the world without and being enriched within she was able, not being burdened with a purse, to run after Christ. In fine she made with holy poverty so strict a compact and acquired such a love for it that she wished not to have anything save only the Lord Christ, nor did she permit her daughters to possess aught besides. For she knew that the most precious pearl of heavenly desire which she had bought by selling all that she had was not to be possessed along with a carking care for worldly things.

She frequently impressed upon the Sisters by her words that the community would be pleasing to God only when it was rich in poverty, and that then only would it remain firm forever if it was always fortified by the most high poverty. She exhorted them to be conformed in the little nest of poverty to Christ the Poor One, whom His poor little Mother had lain as a Babe in a narrow manger.

With this peculiar reminder Clare adorned her breast, as if with a golden necklace, lest the dust of worldly things might creep into her heart. Wishing that her Order should bear the title of Poverty, Clare petitioned Innocent III, of happy memory, for the privilege of Poverty. This magnanimous man, congratulating the virgin upon such fervor, declared hers to be a unique

proposal, since never before had a like privilege been demanded of the Apostolic See. And in order that an unusual favor might respond to an unusual request, the Pontiff, with great joy, himself wrote with his own hand the first letters of the privilege asked for.

The Lord Pope Gregory, of happy memory, a man most worthy of the Chair as he was most venerable in merits, loved the Saint most dearly with a paternal affection. As he was seeking to persuade her that, on account of the condition of the times and the dangers of the age, she should consent to have some possessions which he himself liberally offered, she resisted with an unyielding resolve and would in nowise acquiesce.

To whom the Pontiff answered: "If thou fearest thy vow, we release thee from the vow." "Holy Father," she said, "Never do I wish to be released in anywise from following Christ forever."

The fragments of bread and other odds and ends which the questors brought back she received most gladly, and as if saddened by whole loaves, rejoiced rather in broken pieces. In short, she strove to become conformed by a most perfect poverty to the poor Crucified One, to the end that no perishable thing might separate the Lover from his beloved or hinder her course toward God. There now occur two miracles which this lover of poverty merited to work.

At this point we may perhaps relate some great things wrought by her prayers, as well founded in truth as worthy of veneration. By reason of the calamities which the Church suffered in different parts of the world under the Emperor Frederick, the valley of Spoleto very often drank of the chalice of wrath.

Bands of soldiers and of Saracen archers numerous as bees were stationed by the imperial command to lay waste fortified castles and to besiege cities. And when at one

time their hostile fury was directed against Assisi, the special city of God, and the army was already close to the gates, the Saracens, that worst of races who thirst for the blood of Christians and most shamelessly attempt every wickedness, rushed into the confines of S. Damiano, even into the cloister of the virgins.

The hearts of the ladies sank within them from fear, their voices trembled with terror, and they went in tears to the mother. Although she was ill, Clare with a stout heart directed that she be led to the door and placed before the enemy, a silver casket enclosed in ivory, in which the Body of the Holy of Holies was most devoutly kept, preceding her. And as she wholly prostrated herself before the Lord in prayer she said to her Christ amid tears:

"Doth it please Thee, my Lord, to deliver Thy defenceless handmaids, whom I have nourished with Thy love, into the hands of the pagans? Defend, O Lord, I beseech Thee, these Thy servants whom I in this hour am unable to defend."

Presently He sent her of His special grace a voice as if of a little child which sounded in her ears:

"I will always defend thee."

"My Lord," she said, "and if it please Thee protect the city, for it supporteth us for love of Thee."

And the Lord answered: "It will be troubled, but it shall be defended by My protection."

Then the virgin, raising her tearful face, comforted the weeping, saying: "Rest assured, I bid you, little daughters, that ye shall suffer no harm; only trust in Christ."

Nor had an instant elapsed before, the boldness of these dogs being changed into fear, they quickly descended the walls they had scaled, being overthrown by the power of her prayers.

Then straightway Clare solemnly enjoined those who



had heard the aforesaid voice, saying: "Be most careful in no way, dearest daughters, to reveal that voice to anyone so long as I live."

At another time, Vitalis of Aversa, a man desirous of renown and valiant in battle, led the imperial army, which he commanded as captain, against Assisi. He had stripped the land of trees, devastated the entire countryside, and thus was ready to besiege the city. In menacing words he swore that he would never withdraw until he had taken it; and things had come to such a pass that the city was thought to be in immediate danger.

When Clare, the servant of Christ, heard this, she sighed deeply and, calling the Sisters to her, said: "From this city, dearest daughters, we have daily received many benefits: it would be most ungrateful if we were not to aid it so far as we can in the time of its need."

She ordered ashes to be brought and told the Sisters to bare their heads. And she first sprinkled her own uncovered head copiously with ashes and then placed some on the heads of the others.

"Betake yourselves," she said, "to our Lord and beg with all your hearts for the deliverance of the city." Why go into details? Why recount the tears of the virgins or their vehement prayers?

The following morning the merciful God so made issue with temptation that the entire army was broken up and the proud man departed, contrary to his vows; neither did he harass that land any further. For the leader of the war himself perished by the sword soon afterward.

Seeing that she was the teacher of the untutored and, as it were, the mistress of the maidens in the palace of the Great King, Clare instructed them (the Sisters) in such discipline and cherished them with such love as cannot be described in words. She taught them in the

first place to shut out all tumult from their minds so that they might be intent only upon the hidden things of God. She taught them next not to be affected by the love of their kinsfolk and to forget their home and country in order to please Christ. She exhorted them to make no account of the demands of the perishable body and to subject the conceits of the flesh to the control of reason. She showed them how the cunning enemy lays hidden snares for pure souls; how he tempts saints in one way and worldlings in another.

Finally, she desired that they should labor with their hands at certain hours, so that they might continually be enkindled with new fervor to do the will of God in the exercise of prayer and that, leaving off the torpor of negligence, they might replace the coldness of indevotion by the warmth of holy love. In no place was silence better kept; nowhere was there greater observance and pursuance of all that is becoming; neither did continuous talking bespeak a spirit of loquacity; nor did levity of words show forth a spirit of frivolity. For the mistress herself was sparing in words and expressed her mind most concisely with brevity of speech.

Not only did the venerable Abbess love the souls of her daughters: she also cared for their little bodies with the most charitable thoughtfulness. For very often in the cold of night she herself covered the sleeping Sisters. And she desired those whom she saw were not able to follow the strict community life to be content with a less rigorous observance. If anyone was troubled with temptation or, as sometimes happens, afflicted with sadness, Clare, secretly calling the Sister to her, consoled her amidst tears. She would sometimes throw herself at the feet of the sorrowing that by motherly caresses she might allay their grief.

Her daughters, not ungrateful for such favors, gave

themselves to Clare with entire devotedness. For they loved her as a Mother with tender affection; they revered her as a teacher by reason of her office; they followed her as their guide in the path of perfection, and they admired her as the spouse of God endowed with every prerogative of holiness.

For forty years Clare had run in the race of the most high Poverty, and now, after a number of infirmities, she was nearing the prize of her supernal vocation. For, as the strength of her body succumbed to the rigor of penance in her earlier years, illness had taken possession of her later ones so that, while in good health she had been enriched with the merit of work, she might in ill health enjoy the merit of suffering. For "power is made perfect in infirmity."

How wonderfully power had been made perfect in infirmity in her regard is most evident from the fact that during twenty-eight years of continual illness she uttered no murmur or complaint, but holy conversation and acts of thanksgiving ever came from her lips.

For, though borne down with weight of her infirmities, she seemed to be hastening toward her end, it nevertheless pleased God to delay her death to such time as she might be exalted with befitting honors by the Roman Church of which she was in a special manner the disciple and the daughter. For while the Sovereign Pontiff together with the Cardinals was tarrying at Lyons, Clare began to grow worse than usual, so that a sword of overwhelming sorrow pierced the hearts of her daughters. Presently a certain handmaid of Christ, a virgin consecrated to God, of the Monastery of S. Paolo of the Order of St. Benedict, had the following vision: it seemed that she, along with her Sisters, was present at the illness of the Lady Clare at S. Damiano and that the aforesaid Clare was lying on a costly bed.

While they were weeping and awaiting in tears the passing of the Blessed Clare, a beautiful woman appearing at the head of the little bed addressed the sorrowing Sisters: "Weep not," she said, "O daughters, for her who will conquer: for she may not die until the Lord with His disciples shall come." And behold, after a short time, the Roman Curia arrived at Perugia. Having heard that Clare was becoming worse, the Lord of Ostia hastened from Perugia to visit the spouse of Christ to whom he had been a father by reason of his office, a protector by reason of his solicitude, and ever a devoted friend by reason of his most pure affection.

He nourished the invalid with the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and fed the other Sisters with words of salutary exhortation. Clare with tears besought so great a father that, for the name of Christ, he would ever be mindful of her soul and the souls of the other Ladies. But above all else she begged that he would ask the Lord Pope and the Cardinals to confirm the privilege of Poverty. This the faithful supporter of religion not only promised in word but fulfilled in deed.

Divine Providence now hastened to fulfill its designs in regard to Clare. Christ hastened to call the poor pilgrim to the palace of the supernal Kingdom, and she on her part already longed and sighed with the utmost desire to be dissolved "from the body of this death," and to see Christ reigning in the celestial mansions, whose Poverty on earth she, a poor little one, had followed with her whole heart. Clare, whose holy body was exhausted by her long illness, was overcome by new weakness which betokened her approaching call to the Lord and prepared the way for her perfect health.

The Lord Pope Innocent, of holy memory, together with the Cardinals, made haste to visit the handmaid of Christ and, since he had found her life to surpass that

of all the women of our time, he did not hesitate to honor her death by the Papal presence. Having entered the monastery he approached the bed and touched his hand to the lips of the invalid for her to kiss. She took it most gratefully, and begged, with the utmost reverence, to be allowed to kiss the Pope's foot.

The courtly Lord having mounted a wooden footstool condescendingly extended his foot, and Clare reverently inclining her head impressed a kiss upon it both above and below. With an angelic countenance, she then asked the Sovereign Pontiff for remission of all her sins. "Would to God," he said, "that I had no more need of forgiveness," as he imparted to her the favor of perfect absolution and the grace of a most ample blessing. And when they had all withdrawn, for on that day she received the Sacred Host at the hand of the Provincial Minister, Clare lifted up her eyes to heaven and, joining her hands toward God, said to her Sisters with tears: "Praise the Lord, my little daughters, that in this day Christ hath vouchsafed me a favor so great that heaven and earth would not suffice to repay it. This day," she said, "I have merited to receive the Most High Himself and to behold His Vicar."

The daughters so soon to be left orphans stood about the bed of their Mother and their hearts were pierced with a sword of bitter anguish. Sleep did not overcome them, nor did hunger draw them away; unmindful of rest and food, their only solace was to weep night and day. Amongst them the pious virgin Agnes, overwhelmed by a flood of tears, besought her sister not to depart and leave her. To whom Clare replied: "It is pleasing to God, dearest sister, that I go hence. But, as for thee, cease weeping, for thou shalt come to the Lord soon after myself and before I depart from thee the Lord will grant thee a great consolation."

Finally it seemed that her agony was to last for many



days, during which the faith and devotion of the people became more intense. She was likewise honored daily as a very saint by the frequent visits of Cardinals and prelates. And it is surely marvelous to hear that, although she could take no food of any kind for seventeen days, Clare was nevertheless endowed by God with such fortitude that she strengthened in the service of Christ all who came to her.

For when that kindly man Brother Rainaldo exhorted her to patience in the long martyrdom of such great infirmities, Clare replied most courageously, "Dearest Brother, ever since I have known the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ through His servant Francis, no suffering hath troubled me, no penance hath been hard, no illness arduous." And as the Lord dealt favorably with her and stood, as it were, already at the gate, Clare desired the priests and spiritual Friars to assist her and to read for her the Passion and holy words of the Lord. When Brother Juniper, the renowned jester of the Lord, who often uttered fiery words of God, appeared amongst them, Clare, filled with new joy, asked him whether he had anything new at hand about the Lord. Juniper, thereupon opening his mouth, sent forth like sparks such flaming words from the furnace of his burning heart that the virgin of God derived great consolation from what he said. Finally she turned toward her weeping daughters and commending to them the poverty of the Lord, recalled the Divine benefits in words of praise.

Then she blessed all who had been kind to her, both men and women, and invoked a benediction rich in graces upon all the Ladies of the poor monasteries present and to come. As to the rest, who can relate it without tears? Two of the holy companions of the Blessed Francis stood near. One of them, Angelo, though weeping himself,

comforted the rest in their sorrow. The other, Leo, kissed the bed of the dying Saint.

Clare's forsaken daughters wept at the departure of their beloved Mother and with their tears they followed her whom they were to see no more. They grieved most bitterly, that all their solace was to pass away with Clare and that they were to be left in this vale of tears, without their teacher to comfort them any longer. Shame barely restrained them from doing violence to their bodies, and they felt the pangs of sorrow more keenly because they might not give vent to it by exterior grief. For the rule of the cloister enjoined silence and the vehemence of their sorrow demanded sobs and sighs. Their faces were swollen with tears and yet the pain of their stricken hearts still brought forth new tears.

But the most holy virgin adverting to herself, spoke to her own soul softly.

"Go forth," she said, "without fear. For thou hast a good guide for thy journey. Go forth," she said, "for He who created thee hath sanctified thee and, protecting thee always, loveth thee with a love as tender as that of a mother for her son. Blessed be Thou, Lord," she said, "who hast created me."

When one of the Sisters asked her to whom she was speaking, Clare replied:

"I am speaking to my blessed soul." Nor was that glorious guide far distant. For, turning to a certain daughter, she asked: "O daughter, dost thou see the King of Glory whom I behold?" And the hand of the Lord came upon another one (one of the Sisters' and with her bodily eyes she beheld in her tears a blissful vision. Wounded with a dart of profound sorrow, she directed her gaze toward the door of the house. And behold! there entered a multitude of virgins, clothed in white garments, all of whom wore golden crowns upon

their heads. There walked one amongst them more resplendent than the rest, from whose crown, which in its uppermost part had the appearance of a windowed thurible, such splendor shone forth within the house as to change the night itself into daylight. She advanced to the bed where the spouse of her Son lay, and bending over her lovingly embraced her most sweetly.

A mantle of wondrous beauty was then brought forth by the virgins and, all working together with emulation they covered the body of Clare and adorned the couch. Thus on the day after that of Blessed Laurence that most holy soul passed away to be crowned with an everlasting reward and, the temple of the flesh being dissolved, the spirit soared happily heavenward. Blessed be this going forth from the vale of misery which for Clare became the entrance to a blessed life. And now in lieu of her poor fare on this earth she rejoices at the table of the heavenly citizen; for her mean attire she is blessed in the celestial kingdom adorned with a robe of eternal glory.

# Mother Marie de l'Incarnation

*One of the Founders of Canada*

*The Landing*

By FRANCIS PARKMAN

**A**LAS! Is there no charitable and virtuous lady who will come to this country to teach the word of God to the little Indian girls?"

Thus exclaimed the Jesuit, Father Le Jeune, writing from the Canadian missions to his superior and brother priests in France. For several years these zealous missionaries had been carrying on with tireless energy their work for the Christianization of the pagan Indians. Burning with desire for the salvation of souls, they willingly endured toil, hardships, famine, filth, sickness, solitude, insult,—all that was most revolting to men of culture and learning. All "for the greater glory of God,"—this was the one great aim of their lives; for this they could act or wait, dare, suffer, or die.

By 1637, they had succeeded in establishing a seminary for Huron boys at Quebec; and now they desired to see a similar school opened for the benefit of the Indian girls. Nor had they long to wait.

The response to Father Le Jeune's appeal was the arrival at Tadousac on the fifteenth of July, 1639, of a band of religious women, among whom were three Ursulines from the Convent of Tours in France, accompanied by their benefactress, Madame de la Peltrie. The little party ascended to Quebec in a small craft deeply laden with salted codfish, on which, uncooked, they sub-

sisted until the first of August, when they reached their destination.

On their arrival at Quebec, cannon roared a welcome to them from the fort and batteries, all labor ceased, the storehouses were closed, and the governor, Montmagny, with a train of priests and soldiers met the newcomers at the landing. The nuns on disembarking knelt upon the shore and kissed the sacred soil of the land which was to be the scene of their future labors.

They heard Mass at the church, dined at the fort, and presently set forth for the new settlement of Sillery, four miles above Quebec.

On the strand of Sillery, between the river and the woody heights behind, were clustered the small log cabins of a number of Algonquin converts, together with a church, a mission house and an infirmary,—the whole surrounded by a palisade. It was to this place that the nuns were now conducted by the Jesuits.

The scene delighted and edified them, and in the transport of their zeal they embraced every little Indian girl they met, "without minding," says Father Le Jeune, "whether they were dirty or not. Love and charity," he adds, "triumphed over every human consideration."

In the absence of better quarters, they were lodged at first in a small wooden tenement under the rock of Quebec, at the brink of the river. Here they were soon beset with such a host of children, that the floor of their wretched tenement was covered with beds.

Then came smallpox, carrying death and terror among the neighboring Indians. These thronged to Quebec in misery and desperation, begging succor from the French.

The labors of the Sisters were prodigious. In the infected air of the miserable hovels, where the sick and dying savages covered the floor, and were packed one above another in berths,—amid all that is most distressing



and revolting, with little food and less sleep, these heroic women passed the rough beginning of their new life.

Now and henceforward one figure stands nobly conspicuous in this devoted sisterhood,—that of their superior, Mother Mary of the Incarnation. Engaged in the duties of Christian charity and the responsibilities of an arduous post, she displayed an ability, a fortitude, and an earnestness which commanded respect and admiration.

Her position was a very difficult one. She herself speaks of her life as a succession of crosses and humiliations. But even in her saddest moments, she neither failed in judgment nor slackened in effort. She carried on a vast correspondence, including everyone in France who could aid her infant community with money or influence. She harmonized and regulated it with excellent skill. And in the midst of relentless austerities, she was loved as a mother by her pupils and community.

With good reason is she looked upon as an admirable Christian heroine and revered by many as a saint.

### *The Work of Mother Marie*

By COLONEL WILLIAM WOOD

The landing of La Mère Marie de l'Incarnation was indeed an event of deep national importance. She is unquestionably one of the five founders of New France, and her fame with posterity is quite as secure as that of Champlain, Laval, Frontenac or Talon. The little band of colonists could not foresee this; but they recognized her at once as their fellow-pioneer, the leader of the first *religieuses* to answer the call of their new, wild, far-off home. Canadians were then in dire need of men, money and material from the *Mère Patrie* to safeguard

their country's infant life against stark, constricting circumstances. Yet they freely gave a heartfelt welcome to a woman who brought no other wealth than that which is the only inheritance of the saints on earth. Their hopeful faith in her was amply justified by history, both before and since her time. For, besides being one of the five founders of New France, she was the third of three great nuns whom the three great Latin races brought forth in the service of the Church of Rome at three most critical epochs. All three had a close affinity of devotion; but this was made effectual in the widest diversity of environment. The Italian, St. Catherine of Siena, was the last of the really medieval saints; the Spaniard, St. Theresa, was the first great leader against the Reformation; while in La Mère Marie colonial France found the Moses and Joshua of what proved to be the Promised Land of Canada.

La Mère Marie was neither highly nor lowly born, though very well connected on her mother's side. She was more statesmanlike than St. Catherine, more practical in worldly matters than St. Theresa. They were of medieval and modern Europe; she was a pioneer and missionary in the sternest of the New-World wilds. There, when the colony was still in its impressionable youth, her cunning had fashioned the molds for the same work that her two sister saints had done within their own spheres of usefulness, and fashioned them in a spirit at once akin to and adaptively different from theirs. Her pen, too, completed their accounts of Church activities, from a nun's standpoint, by telling the first story of convent life in North America.

It is true that she wrote no formal work, and that her letters are rather documents than history. And it must be admitted that her writings are not, and never will be, French classics, as St. Catherine's are Italian classics to

a certain extent, and St. Theresa's are Spanish classics altogether. They are just a little like very good dispatches, and by just so much they miss the saving grace of a native style. They were generally written under great pressure of time, amid many distractions and partly as reports. So their very nature prevents vivid presentation, and keeps them on the lower literary level of description. The spiritual passages are always excellent; but here the lack of a sustained context and of the instinct for the one inevitable word combine to prevent the expression from doing full justice to the ideas. The saint, in fact, was greater than the author.

It is her life, rather than her letters, that is the important point even to-day. And this was of still more importance at the time she came to Canada. For she came as the inheritor of a great tradition, as the third of a trio of nuns who played a great interdependent part in the history of their Church, as the foundress of the first convent, as the first educator of Canadian girls, and as the first white woman to evangelize the Indians. And what heightened the importance of all this was that the French-Canadians were then, as they are now, by tradition, training and consent, the most Roman Catholic community in the world. She had no dire troubles within the Church to strain her heart to death, as St. Catherine had; no challenging Protestants to confute, like St. Theresa.

Her spiritual warfare was the universal one against the powers of evil, and her earthly work was against savagery and the forces of nature. In both she was prepared to acquit herself excellently well. And her landing at Quebec was indeed an event of profound significance.

Quebec was then but a tiny outpost on the edge of an unknown, illimitable wilderness. It had been in precarious existence for only some thirty years. Its founder, the staunch and pious Champlain, had died a little over three

years before, leaving it with barely a hundred inhabitants. It had only three small public buildings, Fort St. Louis, the storehouse of the *Cent Associés*, and the parish church of Notre Dame de la Recouvrance, from whose belfry he caused the angelus to be rung three times a day—a custom still religiously observed in Quebec. Beyond this one narrow foothold of France, on the mighty river which came from no one knew what vast inland wilds, Canada was little but a name. Only ten years before La Mère Marie arrived the Kirkes had taken Quebec without a blow; because they had a handful of men to serve the few tiny guns aboard their two little ships, while Champlain despaired of standing a siege on a barrel of fish and half a dozen sacks of potatoes. New France had hardly become even a footnote to history. With what an airy charm of royal condescension does Charles I add the unconsidered trifle of “The County and Lordship of Canada” to the *other* estates of good Sir William Alexander, Earl of Stirling and Baronet of Nova Scotia!

But, among her few, Quebec counted almost as many heroes as early Rome or Sparta. And bravest of the brave, the Jesuits. Here was an untamed, new, defiant world to wrestle with. And here the Church, Antæus-like, rose stronger from each fresh contact with the primal earth. Nothing could stop her indomitable pioneers; neither cold nor heat, hunger, thirst and fatigue; not the lurking danger which dogged their every step, nor the fiendish death by torture which so many of them suffered; nor yet the silent, awful isolation in which their work was done.

They crossed a waste of waters to enter an even wilder waste ashore. Quebec was, in fact, as much a point of departure and landfall for an inland journey as a coast sea-mark is for an ocean voyage. Within each new horizon, far and near, the forest veiled the mysteries of

Earth as closely as the sea; and, like the sea, lay still in calm, or surged in wash and back-wash of green surf beneath the storm. And, whether in calm or storm, it closed impenetrably round each man who ventured within its labyrinthine depths.

The Iroquois—so tiger-like in craft, stealth, spring and wild ferocity—filled with mortal dread everyone else whose way led through the woods. But not the Jesuit. He had no human hand to help him there; yet the bravest soldier was never more confidently eager at the front.

As, in the time of Cæsar, every Roman legionary knew that the might of a whole Empire lay waiting for his call at need; and as, in Nelson's day, every blockading British man-of-war went boldly into action, single-handed and against any odds, sure that every consort would soon be sailing to the sound of the cannonade; so every Canadian Jesuit pressed forward undauntedly, among all the ambushes and strongholds of a pitiless foe, ever upheld by the confident belief that he was no mere lost and isolated man, but one of the pioneers and vanguard of the advancing army of the Lord of Hosts.

The Ursulines held their first triennial election, and their choice naturally fell on La Mère Marie. Their first convent was a mere hovel, near the site of the present Notre Dame des Victoires, and their first Indian school in it was broken up by a terrible attack of smallpox. In 1641 the first stone was laid on the site of the present convent. But the next spring Madame de la Peltrie, burning to carry the cross still further into the wilderness, followed Maisonneuve to the founding of Montreal and left the Ursulines of Quebec almost penniless in their half-finished building. Even M. de Bernières answered La Mère Marie's appeal by advising her to send away her pupils and workmen and come home, unless Providence should raise up a second benefactress.



However, she immediately wrote back to say that having once put her hand to the heavenly task she would never give it up alive. She kept her Indian pupils, urged on her workmen, and, in every detail of duty and leadership, plainly showed how fully confident she was that Canada was only at the beginning of assured success, instead of at the end of utter failure.

After an absence of eighteen months Madame de la Peltrie came back, never again to leave Quebec. She found the new convent inhabited, the school open, and La Mère Marie as full of determined hope as ever. There was little comfort in the new home, a building 92 feet long and 28 feet wide. Two open fires barely took the frost out of the air—stoves were only introduced twenty-six years later. Yet the devoted life went on with increasing vigor. New nuns came out: some from the mother-house at Tours; another from Ploërmel, in the Breton "Land of Pardons." In 1648 the convent was at last finished, after seven years of hard work and much anxiety from lack of funds.

Meanwhile, Quebec grew slowly: half mission, half trading post, and wholly bureaucratic. On New Year's Eve, in 1646, the first play performed in Canada, Corneille's *Le Cid*, was given before the Governor and the Jesuit Fathers. Two years later the Governor-in-Council appointed Jacques Boisdon—bibulous cognomen!—first and sole innkeeper, on the following conditions:—"That the said Jacques Boisdon settles in the square in front of the church, so that the people may go in to warm themselves, and that he keeps nobody in his house during High Mass, sermons, catechism or vespers." In 1663, the population had increased to 500 souls, of whom 150 belonged to religious communities.

The thirteen disastrous years from 1650 to 1663 were the nadir of Canada's fortunes. More than once the

colony nearly lost its flickering life altogether. The Iroquois scourged the land like a plague. Not a man was safe outside a fort. All that were left of the once powerful Hurons crouched miserably under the protection of Quebec.

La Mère Marie was ever foremost in succoring them and bringing their children into her school. She took lessons herself in Huron from Father Bressani, who had escaped death at the hands of the Iroquois as by a miracle, after having suffered the extremity of torture. But, just as her classes were well established, the convent was burnt to the ground. The nuns hardly escaped with their lives, running out barefooted and half-clad into the intense mid-winter cold. La Mère Marie issued her orders as calmly as if going through her regular routine. She went all over the building to make sure that everyone was safe, paused one reverential moment before the altar, and then walked out as the flames met behind her.

Next day the Hurons assembled in full council to see how they could help the "Paleface Virgin Saints." To their grief they found that the whole merchantable wealth of their nation now consisted in two long strings of porcelain beads, each containing twelve hundred. But, headed by their chief, they went in procession to the Hôtel-Dieu, where they were received by La Mère Marie, surrounded by her Ursulines, the Hospitalières, and Father Raguenau, who records the address delivered by Taiearonk.

"Saintly sisters, you see here but the walking corpses of a mighty nation, which is no more. "In the country of the Hurons we have been eaten and gnawed to the bone by famine, war and fire. Alas! your misfortune recalls our own, and with your tears we mingle ours. In our old home the custom was to give one present to unfortunates like you, to dry their tears, and then another to fortify their hearts anew. All that

we have we offer you. First, a string of beads to comfort you, and root your feet so firmly in this land that all your friends across the great water will never be able to draw them out and take you away. And next, another string, to plant a new House of Christ to outgrow the old one, and be a place of prayer and teaching for our children." After the chief had ended there was a long, sad silence, before La Mère Marie responded in words which breathe the very spirit of the Book of Ruth. She told the Hurons how she would never desert them, but fill her days with willing service for their need, and how, when she died, her body would remain among them in Quebec, as her heart and soul did while she was alive.

Other friends pressed to her aid. Father Vignal, her chaplain, though now an old man, set to work on the Ursuline farm near the famous Plains of Abraham, and was rewarded by a bountiful harvest, which fed the teachers and scholars for the succeeding winter. Madame de la Peltrie sheltered the whole community in her own house, which was no more luxurious than the convent, though she was a very rich woman. The Governor, the Jesuits, in fact the whole colony, did everything in their power. But their power fell far short of their good will. Men were scarce, money scarcer; so La Mère Marie and her zealous nuns cleared away the débris with their own hands, and prepared the site for rebuilding. The new convent rose quickly from the ruins of the old. Within a year the nuns were back: all except La Mère de St. Joseph, whose delicate frame at last had given way under repeated hardships, and whose epitaph might be fitly taken from the letter La Mère Marie wrote home: *Ma douce et angélique amie.*

In 1660 Canada was apparently doomed. Only four years had passed since the Iroquois had swooped down on their prey again and nearly killed out the last, palsied

remnant of the Hurons at the Island of Orleans. The lines of war-canoes had glided snake-like down the St. Lawrence to their vindictive massacre, under the very guns of Quebec, the crews screaming savage defiance at the bewildered Governor, who cowered behind the walls of the Château St. Louis. And now every threatening warpath was once more astir with painted Iroquois, wild for a final glut of blood. The rumor ran that their grand council had decreed the extermination of all the Christians in Canada, and that their whole assembled horde was coming hot-foot down the valley of the Ottawa. Night and day the shadow of death closed in from the vast encircling forest, darkening the terror of suspense. All Quebec stood to arms. The Ursuline convent was garrisoned by eighty men and twelve huge watchdogs, trained to hunt down and tear in pieces the hostile Indians. La Mère Marie told off her nuns to different duties, and reserved for herself the most dangerous of all—the carrying of powder and shot in action.

The colony dragged through the misery of three more years. Then came the memorable earthquakes, which threatened an almost greater ruin. One effect of this stupendous and widespread upheaval may still be seen at Les Eboulements, where the whole face of a mountain fell headlong into the St. Lawrence. In Quebec the shocks recurred violently for seven months, and the terrified people thought it was the end of the world. The first great shock scared the roisterers at the carnival out of their senses. The second threw all the Ursulines to the ground while they were singing matins.

Throughout this long, heart-shaking ordeal trembling women and children kept coming to La Mère Marie, as to the one human sanctuary that could preserve them from the Avenging Angel. Not since the Great Famine, nearly four hundred years before, when long proces-

sions of naked Flagellants scourged themselves through every high street and market square in Europe, had there been such universal contrition. The priests could scarcely leave the thronged confessionals, even to eat and sleep. Again the cry of "Back to France!" went up, and was piteously echoed from the whole stricken colony. But two winged souls rose to the foreseeing heights of prophecy, and two clear voices called on the people to stay their panic and have steadfast faith in Canada. One was the voice of Laval, the first bishop, who set a supreme example by founding, in this terrible 1663, the great seminary which still bears his name. The other was the voice of La Mère Marie, who, for the third time in her life, stood between a discouraged people and apparent ruin, and nerved them to one more effort for the salvation of their country.

The unshaken faith of both was fully justified. The tide of fortune was already on the turn. This very year New France became a Royal Province. And in 1665 de Courcelles, the new Governor, arrived. With him was Jean Talon, the great Intendant, well called the Colbert of Canada. The pitifully weak garrison was strongly reinforced by the famous *Régiment de Carignan*, fresh from its victorious Hungarian campaign against the Turks. The gallant Marquis de Tracy arrived as the personal Viceroy of Louis Quatorze. Two hundred and twelve new colonists of title or fortune came out to take up concessions of land. And, most important of all, perhaps, there was a very much larger number of more humble immigrants, who were destined to a long and successful career under the well-known name of *habitants*. With these arrivals a different *régime* began. The first great hero-age was over.

La Mère Marie had a deep, though indirect, influence on the new order of things. All the women of the old



order had passed through her school, all the girls of the new were her pupils. Her reputation for sanctity and wisdom extended over people of both sexes and all classes. And she never failed to throw the whole weight of this wider influence into the scale on the side of Laval, in his fights for the missionary system against the parochial one favored by the Governors, and for Indian prohibition against the indiscriminate brandy traffic favored by the traders.

Laval was the living embodiment of the Church militant, and was inclined to stretch his authority rather far over spheres of public influence which are generally understood to be within the province of the civil power. But his missionary system, worked under his own eye, and through his seminary, undoubtedly met the needs of a new and extending population better than the fixed cures which the Governors vainly tried to establish. Laval wanted his shepherds to keep continual touch with him and each other, while they followed their flocks about the ever-opening pastures. But the Governors preferred to find each individual shepherd sitting ready for inspection inside an isolated fold. As for the brandy trade, it was simply debauching the Indians, body and soul. And when La Mère Marie supported Laval on these two burning questions she proved herself as statesmanlike in the first as she was philanthropic in the second.

Her letters show how many human interests she touched, and with how sure a hand she set each interest in its due relation to her belief and practice. She was an indefatigable writer: in one autumn she sent home over 600 letters. Her correspondents ranged from Royalty down; but most of her spiritual letters were to her son or the Ursulines. In theology she had some lively passages with the Jansenists, who did their best to persuade her to adopt their views. But she was an every-

day and deeply sympathetic eye-witness of the work of the Canadian Jesuits, and that was enough. In religious advice and prayer she was the constant support of an Ursuline of Tours, whom she had initiated before leaving France, and who was aunt to *cette touchante Duchesse de la Vallière, dont la destinée sera l'éternel attendrissement de l'histoire*. She had special devotions and penances in Canada, on behalf of the errant Duchess, who was, like herself, a native of Tours; and the celebrated conversion at court was held to be greatly owing to the ardent intercessions at Quebec.

With the Indians she was, of course, thoroughly at home; and the wisdom of many Blue-books is concentrated into her pithy comments on the grandpaternal royal edict which ordered them to be immediately "civilized" as well as Christianized. "They must see the woods and follow their parents to the chase. It is the nature of the Indian. He cannot submit to constraint. Loss of liberty makes him sad, and sadness makes him sick. We have more experience on this head than anyone else, and we freely confess that we have not civilized one in a hundred. Nevertheless, if it be the will of our Sovereign, we shall attempt the task." On the other hand, she can find no words too strong to explain how successful the nuns were in converting them.

The arrival of the Marquis de Tracy inaugurated a more sheltered life for the inhabitants of Quebec. But La Mère Marie was beginning to sink under the strain of the terrible years that went before. Gradually she was forced to give up her activities, one by one. But what she could do she did with a will. She could no longer teach the Indians under the old tree in the garden; so she had them brought indoors. She wrote a sacred history and a glossary in Algonquin, and a catechism for her old fierce enemies, the Iroquois. Her relations with these

last bloodthirsty braves had gone through every phase. She had received their ambassadors with all due honor, and made an attempt to convert them. She had stood guard against them when they threatened Quebec. And now, having rightly drawn the sword at the proper time, she was again trying the persuasive arguments of the Church.

In 1671 she received a great shock in the death of her life-long friend. Madame de la Peltrie was suddenly struck down with pleurisy early in November. She took the news that it was fatal with perfect calmness; called in the Intendant Talon to witness her will, and thanked him with as much grace as if he had been paying her a visit of state. M. de Bernières, nephew of her old protector in France, gave her the last rites; and, on the evening of the 19th, as the angelus was sounding across the square from the parish church, she died, murmuring the words so often on her lips during her illness—*Lætatus sum in his quæ dicta sunt mihi, in domum Domini ibimus*—*I was glad when they said, we will go into the house of the Lord.*

The following Easter, the year Frontenac first came out to Canada, La Mère Marie was in the throes of a mortal malady herself. She had all the girls in the convent called into the infirmary to receive her last benediction, which she gave to each one separately as they knelt beside her. She entrusted her last message for her son to Mère St. Athanase—*dites-lui que je l'emporte en mon cœur dans le paradis.* Nor was public duty forgotten.

One of her last acts was to dictate a letter to an influential personage in France, urging the completion of her well-considered scheme for the reunion of all branches of the Ursuline Order throughout the world. To the great regret of everyone Bishop Laval was then absent from Quebec. But the veteran Père Lallemand, who

had served in every post of danger since the time of Champlain, gave her the last consolations of the faith.

For some hours on the day of her death she neither spoke nor heard—rapt in ecstasy between two worlds. The evening *Angelus* was sounding, as it had for her fellow-laborer five months before, when she opened her eyes for one final look at the Ursulines kneeling round her, and then gently closed them again forever. All who were present saw a ray of celestial light rest on her face as her soul took flight for Heaven, and believed it to signify her consummated union with her Lord. The Ursulines commemorate this to the present day, by singing a special *Te Deum* on the last night of each April.

Père Lallemand preached the funeral sermon, pronounced the benediction, and the congregation dispersed. Then the Governor and Intendant, with the clergy and nuns, approaching the bier, were so struck by her expression that they sent for an artist to perpetuate it. The original of this portrait was burnt in the second fire; but a contemporary copy sent to France was afterwards returned to Canada, and is now in the convent. The portrait taken, the coffin was closed and this inscription placed upon it: *Ci-gît la Révérende Mère Marie Guyart de l'Incarnation, première supérieure de ce monastère, décédée le dernier jour d'avril, 1672, âgée de 72 ans et 6 mois. Religieuse professe, venue de Tours. Priez pour son âme.*

The night she died in Quebec her Ursuline niece in Tours distinctly saw her laid out in a winding sheet, while a voice breathed close by, "Elle est morte." The other nuns were averse from believing this story next morning; but the first ship from Canada brought the confirmation of it. [By kind permission of the author and Messrs. Glasgow Brook & Company, Publishers, Toronto. Copyrighted by William Wood and Messrs. Glasgow, Brook & Company.]

## Mother Seton

*Founder of the American Sisters of Charity*

By CHARLES I. WHITE, D.D.

ELIZA ANN BAYLEY was born in the city of New York, on the 28th of August, 1774, nearly two years before the declaration of American independence. She was the younger of two daughters, the only children of Dr. Richard Bayley, by his first marriage with Catharine Charlton. Her parents were both Americans by birth, and of respectable standing in society. As the sequel will show, her father was a man of strong mind and liberal education, and rose by his genius and industry to an eminent rank in the medical profession. Her mother was the daughter of an Episcopalian clergyman, and a sister of Dr. Charlton, a much respected physician of the day, who was the first "to set up a gig," as they said in those days—which means, to keep a carriage to drive to practice in. Miss Bayley had not yet completed her third year, when death deprived her of her maternal parent, whose vigilant and affectionate care was so desirable a protection at that tender age. She suffered this bereavement, however, too early to estimate the extent of her loss; and all her affections as she advanced in life became centered in her father.

Upon him devolved entirely the guardianship of her youth and the subsequent care of her education—duties which engaged his earnest and unceasing attention. Though compelled, by the tender age of his daughter, to depend, in a great measure, on the fidelity of others for the attentions which her situation required, he never ceased to exercise an immediate and watchful superin-



tendence over her welfare, and to evince at all times that affectionate solicitude which, however imperatively demanded by the absence of maternal care, was peculiarly congenial to his elevated and benevolent nature.

The political troubles which at this period agitated the country, in its violent struggle for independence, was another consideration which tended to strengthen the bond between the parent and the child.

Great Britain and the colonies were now at open war with each other, and the city of New York participated largely in the danger and confusion which such events naturally produce. The English troops having entered the town in 1776, retained possession of it for the space of seven years; soon after which the political horizon began to wear a brighter aspect. During this period of uncertainty and alarm, and until the cessation of hostilities, when the glorious star of freedom arose upon the American Confederacy, Miss Bayley was almost continually under the eye of her father, and conceived for him all the affection that a child can entertain for a parent. This unbounded attachment she manifested in various ways. Frequently, when at school, she would learn her task quickly, repeat it, and then watch a favorable opportunity of eluding the vigilance of her preceptress, in order to run down the street to meet her father, who passed that way, embrace him, and then hasten back before the old lady could notice her absence.

She not only regarded him as her protector, but, with that generous disposition which knows how to appreciate a benefit, she repaid his anxiety and kindness with the practice of every virtue that could gratify the paternal heart. Filial piety was the spring of all her actions—the incentive to all her exertions. Though incapable of understanding the importance of study at her tender age, she valued her scholastic exercises because prescribed by her

father. "French and music must have their hours," said he. This was sufficient to recommend them, and to excite her diligent application.

Such was the veneration and affection which she entertained for him, that on no one occasion was she ever known to oppose his will or disobey him in the slightest particular. Nor was this virtue unrewarded by Him who has promised a rich blessing to the dutiful and obedient child. Her future career will exhibit a striking verification of those words in the book of Ecclesiasticus: "Honor thy father in work and word, and all patience, that a blessing may come upon thee from him, and his blessing may remain in the latter end."

With amiable qualities of heart Miss Bayley united talents of a superior order. Nature had endowed her with a quick and comprehensive mind, a sound judgment, and fertile imagination; and she was not inactive in availing herself of the best opportunities for the cultivation of her mental powers. At this time, America offered but slender resources for education in comparison with the facilities which are now enjoyed. The few seminaries of learning that had been established afforded but a very limited course of instruction, and even these were closed for several years during the stormy period of the Revolution. Under these circumstances, Miss Bayley was compelled to depend principally upon domestic tuition and study for the acquirement of the knowledge.

Happily she possessed, in the abilities of her father, a means of supplying the deficiency in the usual methods of instruction; and, under his direction, with a natural disposition for self-improvement, she applied herself, with considerable success, to the various branches of female education. Dr. Bayley, in the training of his children, looked to the formation of habits which would result in honorable usefulness in after-life.

His penetrating and observant mind easily perceived, as he remarks in one of his letters, that the American youth were naturally given to a spirit of independence, which, impatient of control, must become, for many, a by-way to certain vexation and disappointment. Convinced that a "brilliant character is not always a solid character," he diligently impressed upon the minds of those under his charge the necessity of self-restraint, reflection, and curtailment of pleasure, as the only means, however disagreeable at first, of reaping the sweet fruits of happiness in maturer years.

These lessons of wisdom were carefully reduced to practice by his younger daughter; and to the due and assiduous exercise of self-restraint may be attributed, in a great measure, her subsequent triumph over the series of trials and difficulties which she had to encounter in pursuing the course marked out for her by divine Providence.

In her personal appearance, Miss Bayley was of rather low stature, but her figure was well proportioned and her movements graceful. A perfect symmetry was displayed in her features, which, with the sparkling yet mild expression of her eye, rendered her countenance the mirror of a noble and intelligent soul. Possessing an uncommon degree of vivacity and cheerfulness, she used it with tact and moderation, for the charm of those around her. In the twentieth year of her age, she accepted the hand of Mr. William Seton, a highly respectable merchant in the city of New York.

He was a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and a gentleman of amiable disposition and engaging manners. His family enjoyed the highest character and standing. A portion of his early life he had spent in a mercantile house at Leghorn—a circumstance which the subsequent history of his wife will show to have been a

dispensation of divine Providence for the spiritual benefit of herself, her family, and the innumerable souls who would be led by her example into the way of salvation.

At this period, however, she little imagined that her religious views would ever be exchanged for the doctrines of the Catholic Church. Her early education, and the recent connection she had formed with a strictly Episcopalian family, both wedded her to the Protestant system, and it may be truly said that she was a rigid observer of its principles and forms.

At the time of her marriage, Mrs. Seton beheld a prospect of the most flattering description before her. Her husband's affairs were in a flourishing condition, and, surrounded as she was by a numerous circle of admiring friends, she had reason to expect, from the new alliance she had formed, every temporal happiness that can be realized on this side of the grave. Divine Providence, however, did not permit her to be dazzled by the fair scenes of enjoyment around her.

The ordeal which he had in reserve for her at a later period of life demanded a thorough training of her mind and heart, and could be met successfully only by one who had learned the practice of patience and resignation under the trying dispensations of Heaven, and had the moral energy to set aside the vain considerations of this earth whenever conflicting with the higher interests of an immortal life. We accordingly find her on all occasions deeply impressed with the truth of an all-wise and overruling Providence, and possessing a lively sense of the duty of submission to the afflictions of life.

The first year of her marriage, in the summer of 1794, Mr. Seton's business having called him to Philadelphia, where the yellow fever had made its appearance, she writes to him in a strain of affectionate solicitude, not a little increased by the apprehension of the danger to which

he was exposed; but her fears do not degenerate into excess; she moderates them, and sustains her fortitude by the reflection that "patience and submission are the only way to gain the blessings of Heaven."

In a letter to one of her relations, to whom she was united by the closest ties of friendship, she furnishes another evidence of the supernatural view which she was accustomed to take of passing occurrences, while she exhibits, at the same time, the self-control and wisdom which she exercised in the correspondence with her friends.

"I received your letter of the 22d September. Although I make it a rule never to answer letters while under the influence of the first impressions I receive from them, I cannot refrain from immediately replying to it—and it is not a very easy task to preserve my usual sincerity with you; but I believe even that is best, for my mind is in a state of anxiety and distress which does not admit of any calculations respecting the enjoyments of this life. In one short week, sisters, friends, and the whole world, may be nothing to me. There never passes a day but some family is deprived of its support, children of their parents, and the wife of her husband, even in the number of my acquaintance. My William goes every day to town, and is more exposed than many who have lost their lives; that he should escape depends on that mercy which has never yet failed, and which I have reason to bless every hour of my life."

Some months later, she addresses her father in the following language, which exhibits the sprightliness of her disposition, and, at the same time, establishes her claim to considerable merit in the epistolary style: "My very dear Mr. Monitor: That you are in the enjoyment of health in the midst of dangers, toils, and death, is a subject of high exultation to me; and if the prayers of a



good, quiet little female are supposed to be of any avail, it will be long continued to you, with the hope that the visual rays of our fellow-citizens will in time be brightened by your labors, and their attention awakened by the voice of truth and conscience. I had the pleasure to hear a Mr. Delmas, a French physician, refer a number of strangers, both French and English, to a publication, called the *Monitor*, as the best thing written on the subject of yellow fever, and as the only one that points out its true cause and origin. He said he did not know who was the author, but he must be the best friend of humanity, and should be considered by the Americans as their best adviser. I imagine my eyes were larger and blacker at that moment than usual, on hearing you praised so highly."

They who have ever felt the pressure of adversity will readily understand the happiness of a family that possessed a guiding spirit like Mrs. Seton, whose words were invariably those of comfort, and who never failed to discover in the higher considerations of religious truth a solace and compensation for the passing evils of life. In this way the burden of affliction was lightened, and every bosom became animated with brighter hopes.

At this time, Mrs. Seton was the mother of four children:—Anna Maria, William, Richard, and Catharine Josephine. In the midst of this infant group, which presented to the parent's eye all that the fondest affection could desire, she found opportunities of exercising virtues which are equally essential and ornamental in the domestic circle.

No love could exceed that of Mrs. Seton for the children whom Providence had confided to her care; but it was a love elevated and enhanced by the reflection that they constituted an important charge, for which she would be accountable to God. Hence, while she carefully

watched over their temporal welfare, she was still more solicitous for the formation of their minds and hearts to the knowledge and esteem of virtuous principles. Not only did she teach their youthful lips to praise God and invoke his blessings; she availed herself of every opportunity to impress upon them this obligation, as well as the other duties of which they were capable.

Sometimes she would send them little notes, in which the assurance of maternal affection would invariably be mingled with the words of salutary instruction, but conveyed in a form at once so natural and attractive that they could not fail to produce a most happy and lasting impression.

Mrs. Seton did not confine her charity to the administering of good advice; she went abroad to dispense comfort and relief among the victims of misfortune. She was an active member of the "Widows' Society in New York,"—the benevolent object of which is indicated by its name; and such was her devotedness to the service of the poor, that she and one of her relatives, who was commonly associated with her on errands of mercy, were called Protestant Sisters of Charity.

They not only visited those who were in want, but labored with their hands to increase their means of rendering assistance. Her benevolent efforts in behalf of the afflicted are thus described by one who was intimately acquainted with her at the time:—"Not satisfied with a formal profession without the love of God in her soul, she considered no sacrifice too great to promote the glory of her heavenly Parent, and add to the felicity and happiness of her fellow-creatures. How often and with what delight has she explored the abodes of wretchedness, to administer temporal and spiritual comfort! How many tears of joy has she caused to flow! How many prayers have been raised to Heaven for her welfare! How

often have the widow and the fatherless blessed her!"

Elizabeth Bayley Seton owed her intense interest in others to her father. The private worth and professional distinction of Dr. Bayley concurred to merit for him the warmest affection and profoundest respect of his children, while the valuable services which he rendered to the cause of science and humanity won for him a deserved celebrity in Europe as well as in America.

Having completed his studies in England, he commenced the practice of medicine in New York, and soon acquired distinction by his successful treatment of diseases and his skill in surgery. He was the first to discover the inflammatory nature of the croup,—on which he published a work,—was a member of the Medical Faculty of Columbia College from its commencement, and was one of the earliest promoters of the New York Dispensary.

Having devoted particular attention to the investigation of yellow fever and its causes, during repeated ravages of this fearful scourge, he wrote a work on the subject, which is distinguished for its practical and sound observations. Appointed health physician to the port of New York, he became chiefly instrumental in procuring the enactment of the state quarantine laws, and successfully contributed to obtain similar regulations from the general government.

In the discharge of his office as health physician to the port of New York, he passed much of his time at Staten Island, where vessels were detained at quarantine. Here the scenes of distress and suffering which occurred among the emigrants, who frequently arrived in considerable numbers, and which almost defy description, called into constant action the energetic benevolence of Dr. Bayley. While the yellow fever was raging on board the infected vessels, hurrying to the grave hundreds of unfortunate beings who had scarcely seen the light of day

since they had embarked from home, and little infants were dying by scores as soon as admitted into the fresh air, or famishing at the mother's breast, unable to receive other nourishment or to find it, Dr. Bayley was everywhere seen among the sick and the dying—sometimes carrying the almost lifeless babes in his own arms, to place them in comfortable beds.

To the countless numbers that came from foreign countries, and were suffering from the pestilence, he was a real father. In offices of humanity he never wearied, and every rising sun found him already two or three hours engaged in the work of charity.

In the discharge of his duty as health physician, in August, 1801, he directed the passengers and crew of an Irish emigrant vessel with ship fever to go on shore to the rooms and tents appointed for them, leaving their baggage behind. This was in the evening. Early the following morning, upon going to the hospital, he found that his orders had been disobeyed, and crew and passengers, men, women, and children, well, sick, and dying, with all their baggage, were huddled together in one apartment, where they had passed the night. Into this apartment, before it had been ventilated, he imprudently entered, and remained but a moment, being compelled to retire by the most deadly sickness at the stomach and intense pain in the head, which seized him immediately upon entering the room. Returning home, he retired to his bed, from which he never rose.

On the seventh day of his sickness, about the sixteenth of August, Dr. Bayley expired, leaving behind him a high character as a clinically-instructed physician, "an excellent and bold operator, a prompt practitioner, of rapid diagnosis and unhesitating decision. In demeanor a perfect gentleman, honest and chivalrously honorable; of perfect integrity, and little tolerant of obliquity in others;

ever ready to serve the cause of his profession; inflexible in his attachments, invincible in his dislikes, and unbrooking of insult; in temper fiery, yet suddenly cool—a fault which he knew and regretted; thoroughly fearless; somewhat too strongly partial to certain patients, but withal charitable to a fault.”

He was one of those characters that make warm friends and bitter enemies. His servants and dependants were much attached to him, and for several years after his death they were known to shed tears at the mention of his name.

Elizabeth Bayley Seton was destined to go through many trials besides the loss of her father. Her husband developed consumption and she took him to Italy for his health but in vain. Italian friends were very kind to her and she came to love and understand the people of Italy very well. Above all in her sorrow and distress the Church made a strong appeal to her and many prejudices dropped from her. On her return to America a widow with five children life looked blank indeed. She was without means, for her husband's affairs had become involved during his illness, and she had to support herself. She opened a school and gradually came to the resolution to devote herself to teaching and charity. She became a convert to the Catholic Church and in organizing her school found herself the foundress of a Sisterhood whose duty it was not only to teach but to care for the ailing, the orphans and the old and all in need. How much she had to go through of inconvenience will be realized from the fact that her first little convent was a house with but four rooms to accommodate sixteen persons for all their daily round of duties as well as for sleeping and eating. Most of them were ladies who had been accustomed to the niceties of life and yet bravely took up their training under these cramped conditions.



The foundation of the American Sisters of Charity which thus came about very soon proved to fill a long-felt need. After a few years houses were opened in Philadelphia, in New York as well as in Baltimore, and then after a time in Cincinnati and at Halifax and in New Jersey. At the present time there are nearly 10,000 Sisters of Charity in the United States who look back to Mother Seton as their foundress. The spirit that she breathed into her community of utter forgetfulness of self and thoughtfulness of others, has continued to animate her daughters and they are accomplishing an immense amount of work.

It has been said that they have a response for every need of humanity. If you are a foundling and have been abandoned by those whom natural ties ought to bind to you, the Sisters of Charity will take you. Nay, if an unmarried mother finds herself without refuge or resource they will take her in and care for her and then make due provision for her special time of trial and for the care of her child. When parents are dead the orphans will be cared for by the Sisters and then if tuberculosis should develop in the earlier years or insanity later in life, they have provision for the care of these afflicted. In sickness or injury their general hospitals afford a refuge and when people are old and there is no one to care for them, the Sisters maintain homes for the aged. Varied as are these modes of charity they do not represent all that the Sisters are doing and are ready to do. Their help in emergencies has often been of the greatest possible service and particularly has raised the morale of the people in times of epidemic. That was illustrated very well by their volunteer work in the care of influenza patients in Philadelphia to which a special chapter is devoted in this volume. Some fifty years ago when there was an epidemic of smallpox in New York and

serious abuses developed in the pesthouse where smallpox patients were treated so that people generally were refusing to allow their friends suffering from the disease to be taken away, thus leaving intensely contagious foci of the disease in crowded quarters of the city, the Sisters of Charity volunteered to take up the nursing at the special hospital for the smallpox cases and saved the situation.

During the Civil War after the battle of Gettysburg the Sisters left their convent to nurse the wounded soldiers on the battlefield and large numbers of them were transported to their convent at Emmitsburg not far away and were cared for there. Within scarcely more than ten years after Mother Seton's death they were called upon for a serious emergency of this kind in Philadelphia which has been described by Miss Nutting and Miss Dock in their "History of Nursing" (New York, 1907). Cholera came to Philadelphia as it did rather frequently in the first half of the nineteenth century and many of the patients were transferred to Blockley, the almshouse hospital of the city. The historians of nursing have given some idea of the awful abuses that were practiced on poor patients of all kinds and especially the insane of whom there were a large number in the Philadelphia hospital. Investigations that had been made showed that it had been "impossible to secure suitable nurses; only the most depraved creatures could be hired; an abandoned, profligate set of nurses and attendants who rioted on the provisions and comforts left for the sick."

In the midst of this came the cholera epidemic and an awful state of affairs. Finally the Sisters of Charity from Emmitsburg were asked to take charge of the hospital. The rest of the story is from Miss Nutting and Miss Dock. "Only one short interregnum of peace broke the long and distressing reign of violence, neglect, and cruelty in Blockley. In 1832 there was a severe epidemic of

cholera, and the attendants demanded more wages. To keep them to their duties the wages were increased, but were promptly spent for liquor. An orgy of intoxication ensued, and the helpers, crazed with drink, fought like furies over the beds of the sick, or lay in drunken stupor beside the bodies of the dead. So complete was the demoralization that the guardians applied to Bishop Kendrick for Sisters of Charity from Emmitsburg. The call was responded to promptly; indeed, the Sisters started two hours after the summons was received.

"They took in hand the whole desperate situation, at once restored order and disseminated about them an atmosphere of tranquility and quiet energy. The Sisters remained for some months, and their work was so deeply appreciated by the guardians that the Committee of the House, in a set of resolutions commending their great services, resolved also that they be requested to remain permanently. This, however, Father Hickey, their superior, negatived, giving his reasons at length. He did not consider Blockley the department of charity in which the Sisters could be most usefully employed, so the guardians were obliged to let them go, with glowing tributes which may well have been heartfelt."

A little more than a century has elapsed now since the death of Mother Seton and her Sisters of Charity seem only just beginning their great good work of caring for those in need. The little handful of Sisters of the early days has been replaced by thousands of women who devote their lives to charity and to education. That is to that dearness of human beings to them because of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, as well as to such development of the intellect of girls and young women as will bring them most effectively happiness in life as far as that is possible and the satisfaction with existence that comes from unselfishness. Their little

academies that used to house a few dozen of girls in their teens have now developed into colleges where many hundreds of young women are obtaining the higher education under such circumstances as foster training of the will and the heart as well as of the mind. Bertrand Russell emphasized not long ago the heart of man as the sum total of kindly impulses. Commenting on it he said (*Icarus*, New York, 1924), "Where they (these kindly impulses) exist, science helps them to be effective; where they are absent, science only makes men more cleverly diabolic."

It is this training of a whole being, the mind and heart and soul, that seemed to Elizabeth Bayley Seton the highest vocation that a woman could have and it was for this particularly that she turned to the work of education and then laid the foundation of a Sisterhood. What she has accomplished can be seen in the many hundreds of institutions of all kinds the directors of which look back to her as their guiding spirit. What the future holds only Providence knows but the outlook seems most promising for the accomplishment of a really wonderful work in teaching people not only how happiness can be attained hereafter but also here on earth. Meantime these daughters of Elizabeth Bayley Seton, the American Sisters of Charity, are the happiest women in the country. Blessed is the man or woman who has found his or her work, and they have found it.

# The Irish Sisters of Charity and Mercy

## *Reformers of Hospitals*

By JAMES J. WALSH

AT the beginning of the nineteenth century hospitals, especially in the English-speaking world, were at the lowest ebb that they have ever been. Miss Nutting and Miss Dock in their "History of Nursing" have toward the end of their first volume a chapter on "The Dark Period in Nursing." This was from the later seventeenth up to the *middle of the nineteenth century*. "During this time the condition of the nursing art, the well-being of the patient and the status of the nurse, all sank to an indescribable level of degradation."

Jacobsohn, in his "History of Care for the Ailing," says that, "the hospitals in the cities were like prisons, with bare undecorated walls and little dark rooms, small windows where no sun could enter and dismal wards where fifty or one hundred patients were crowded together deprived of all comforts and even of necessities." He emphasizes the contrast between the municipal and state institutions of this period, and "the beautiful gardens, roomy halls and springs of water of the old cloister hospitals of the Middle Ages." There was none of these, "still less the comforts of their friendly interior."

The nursing was awful. Dr. Stephen Smith who introduced the trained nurse into this country told the story of the sort of nurses that they had—the only ones they could get—at Bellevue Hospital. They were the "ten day women," that is women who had been sentenced to ten days in the workhouse for being drunk and disorderly and who when they sobered up if they had had any ex-



perience in family nursing were transferred to the hospital side of Bellevue to take care of the sick. The nurses in England were as bad if not worse. Dickens' description of Sairey Gamp is usually considered one of his worst caricatures, utterly exaggerated for effect. It is a literal description of the actuality around him. Miss Nutting and Miss Dock say, "The drunk and untrustworthy Gamp was the only professional nurse," and they add, "In England where the religious orders had been suppressed and no substitute organization given, it might almost be said that no nursing class at all remained during this period." "If I can but obtain a sober set of nurses," wrote one hospital manager, "it is as much as I can hope for."

When conditions in hospitals had reached their lowest possible ebb of service for humanity, it will be surprising for most people to learn that it was the Irish Sisters who began the reform, but that was what actually happened. Ireland had some fine old historic traditions of hospital service for the ailing. At a time when there was no such feature of social life as organized care for the poor when they were sick among the nations, this was very well developed in Ireland because of the clan idea, according to which men belonged not so much to themselves as to their clan. They were therefore cared for when ill because they represented assets to the community. As I have told at some length in the chapter on Ancient Irish Medicine, in the volume "The World's Debt to the Irish", some of the hospitals in which this care was exemplified date from long before Christianity. No other nation has any such record except the Hindus and that because of their doctrine of metempsychosis which made them dread the possibility of themselves or their near relatives being reincarnated in another life in the persons of the very poor or even of animals. One

of the earliest hospitals for the poor in all history was founded in Ireland 300 B. C. by Princess Macha. It was called *Broin Beargh* (House of Sorrow) and came afterwards to be used as the Royal residence in Ulster, so that some idea of its extent and structural significance can be obtained.

Irish hospitals in the early part of the nineteenth century had a little better reputation than those in other English-speaking countries, above all in England and here in America. The Irish School of Medicine the outstanding figures of which were Graves and Stokes and Corrigan, after each one of whom a disease described by him has been named, came to be known familiarly throughout the medical world. I cannot help but feel that one of the reasons why the Irish hospitals were so good for clinical teaching was that there was so much disease among the poor Irish in the awful conditions that existed in their cities and particularly in Dublin that they provided much more opportunity for the study and treatment of all sorts of pathological conditions than could be found almost anywhere else in the world of that day. Wages were almost unbelievably low, the prices of the necessities of life went up after the Napoleonic wars, there was a great deal of unemployment, nutrition was almost indescribably bad, the people lived huddled together with almost no one to care for them and their ignorance of hygiene was, however, at such a low ebb that even at best they would have been helped little by it. The physicians and surgeons and their lack of knowledge were as much responsible as social neglect for the conditions that developed in both hospitals and crowded city slums.

There was need of social service, but still more need of charity in the highest sense of that beautiful word, that is of the dearness of fellow men because of the

brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God. The first stirrings of that came in Ireland and young Irish women took up in very simple fashion the task of doing as much good as possible to those around them who were in need. They had no idea of the way their work would develop. They never dreamt that they were beginning a great social reform. They would probably almost have been overcome by the thought that it was actually a world reform that they were taking in hand, but such it proved to be. None of them at the beginning had a thought of creating a religious community that would devote itself to the solution of social problems and the care of social ills and the reform of social abuses. Their work has developed in such a fashion as to make it a response not only to the sad needs of their day in the cramped and narrow environment which they faced but throughout the English-speaking world at least and indeed far beyond that in their missionary labors.

The story of these women is extremely interesting and deserves to be told much more at length than we can afford for it here but it illustrates very well the temper of the Irish race in their feelings for other people. After reading their story it is much easier to understand just what the Irish men and women of the seventh and eighth and ninth centuries did for the decadent civilization of that time. What they did was done without the slightest thought of any glory or prestige accruing to themselves. They shrank from anything like that. They just wanted to do the next thing as well as possible, and with the charity of Christ urging them that next thing was done so well, that others wanted to share in their labor and secure something of the satisfaction in life that came as the result of it. We wonder that there should have been within a century after St. Francis' death many thousands of Franciscans, but it is much easier to understand that

when we realize that within a hundred years of the foundation of the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland there are over 20,000 women, many of them young and all of them with hearts full of courage and hope, ready to follow in the footsteps of their foundress Mother McAuley in solving the problems of social abuses of various kinds. Yet that is exactly what has happened in our own day and under our eyes and that will doubtless be as much of a surprise to historians of the future time as the foundation of the Franciscans and their rapid spread throughout the world is for historians now who do not understand how living and almost infinitely diffusive of itself is the spirit of the Church. *Bonum est diffusivum sui*, "good has a tendency to diffuse itself", to make itself felt ever wider and wider, is a maxim of medieval philosophy said to come from Aristotle. It is the parable of the mustard seed over again, the smallest of all yet growing into a large tree to shelter the birds of the air.

It was into these conditions of awful hospitals and still worse slums which we have given so faint a sketch of that at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century a group of noble-hearted Irish-women came to bring consolation to the poor, help to the physicians, light and leading for those who could not help themselves and Christian charity for all with whom they came in contact. Their work diffused itself all over the English-speaking world and we are all reaping the benefit of it.

The first of these was Mother Mary Aikenhead, foundress of the Irish Sisters of Charity. As a young woman she was brought in contact with some of the poorest parts of Dublin and became intensely interested in the work of doing good to those who needed help so badly. Bishop Murray, of Dublin, met her in this work and realized that here indeed was a chosen soul. After

a time he sent her a message that he would be glad to count her among the first Irish Sisters of Charity. Miss Aikenhead replied that if an efficient superior and two or three able sisters undertook the work she would gladly join them. Nothing further was said and Mary kept on wondering that the efficient superior on whom so much would depend had not appeared. "At last one day to her unspeakable amazement she learned that it was she herself who was to head the undertaking. Naturally timid, extremely averse to putting herself forward in any way and entertaining but a poor opinion of her own ability, she at first could not believe that it had entered into anyone's head to place her in such a position; and when there could be no doubt as to the intention of Dr. Murray on this point her courage failed her and she was filled with consternation."

It took some time to calm her fears but finally she consented on condition that she should have an opportunity to be trained in a convent before undertaking what seemed to her beyond her strength. Bishop Murray gladly consented to that and after some investigation the most suitable place for her training seemed to be the Convent of the Blessed Virgin Mary at York in England. The nuns in that institution took no vow of enclosure and made it a practice to go out to visit the poor in their homes. Their work was very like what the Irish Sisters of Charity were to undertake. The superior promised a hearty welcome to Miss Aikenhead and to her companion, Miss Alicia Walsh, who, fourteen years older, was to be trained with her. She was supposed to balance Mary Aikenhead's enthusiasm by her more quiet maturity. Miss Walsh is described as "a charming and educated lady who had a great taste for reading and loved poetry." It has been said of her



that "her love of the poor was almost romantic in its tenderness and her patriotism was enthusiastic. During the rebellion of 1798 she went visiting the prisons at much personal risk to carry messages from friends or to console the inmates who were the objects of her deepest sympathy." It is easy to understand that these two were well blanced and might well make the nucleus of an important religious community.

They went for a single year's convent training, they stayed for three years. When the Sisters returned to Dublin there was question whether they should affiliate themselves with the French Sisters of Charity, but Mary Aikenhead decided that such an international allegiance would bring complications. They had to adopt a costume for themselves. This was 1815 and Catholic emancipation had not come as yet so they were not publicly known as Mother Augustine and Mother Catherine, the names which they had adopted in religion, but as Mrs. Aikenhead and Mrs. Walsh.\* Mrs. Aikenhead bore that name to the end of her life though Mrs. Walsh came gradually to be known by the title, Mother Catherine. There was no warrant in law for any such religious foundation and until the establishment of the Ursulines and the Presentation order a few years before under Nano Nagle's influence in Cork, the only religious communities in Ireland for several centuries were the Poor Clares, usually hidden away in little houses in the

\**Mrs.* is an abbreviation for *mistress*, which is the feminine correlative of master. It was formerly a title of address or courtesy nearly equivalent to madam, applied to any woman or girl, but now chiefly and specifically to married women. During the Elizabethan and Jacobean times and even in Queen Anne's day a woman who had mastered any art or branch of study was called a mistress and the original meaning of the word was a woman with authority or power of control, as over a house or over other persons, a female head, chief or director. The assumption by the Sisters of this title, now reserved only for the married, was perfectly in accord with the usage of the time.

west of Ireland and having to move from one place to another every now and then because of government persecution.

Mother Aikenhead's little community increased slowly at first. Their motto was "the charity of Christ urgeth us." The nuns began to be seen in the lanes and back streets of Dublin, visiting the sick in their homes. They taught in the poor schools that were attended by many children. The number of Sisters being limited the work was heavy and the strain great. Three nuns died soon after their profession in the second year of the community's history. This was an intense grief to Mother Aikenhead and to her last day she could not allude to the deaths of these early members of the community without deep emotion. She had had many apprehensions as to her capacity for superiorship but now that the work was under way her uneasiness vanished.

Fortunately she had a sense of humor. Otherwise she would never have borne up under some of the trials that came to her. Some of the early records are very interesting. "Sometimes she was novice mistress in the place of Mother Catherine, she went on the sick mission abroad, whilst often hers was the hand which cooked the dinner also and washed the stairs and corridors. The former was not indeed a heavy duty, as on two days of the week, it consisted of nothing better than stirabout. An amusing incident is related of how one day, when all the Sisters were out, the Rev. Mother set herself the task of scouring the stairs. She was in the midst of her work with her long skirt pinned back, and a large check apron, covering her habit, when she was interrupted by a ring at the door. Descending instantly to answer the summons she found that a distinguished prelate desired to see the Superioress of the Sisters of Charity. She at once showed the visitor into the reception room, and

retired, saying the Rev. Mother would be with him presently. In a few minutes the apron was removed, the skirt let down and Mrs. Aikenhead entered the parlor to hold high converse with his Lordship, who apparently never connected the hard-working serving Sister that had admitted him with the dignified and elegant Mother Superior of the Order."

Soon other houses were founded because there was a demand for these women who did so much good for the poor in their homes and for the children in the schools. One of the early foundations was in Cork which was Mother Aikenhead's birthplace. Her nuns were warmly welcomed in Cork. The people were the poorest of the poor, plague and cholera and typhus fever known as famine fever worked havoc among the population of Cork but also nearly everywhere in Ireland.

Mrs. William O'Brien in her volume "Unseen Friends" tells the story of those early years. "Many were the duties undertaken by the Sisters of Charity; teaching poor children, visiting the sick and nursing them, while others undertook the solemn duty of visiting the prisoners in Kilmainham jail. It came to them to prepare poor condemned women to meet their fate. They visited them and remained with them until the last moment.

"When the cholera broke out in Ireland, the Sisters of Charity threw themselves into the work. In Dublin, Mother Catherine undertook the care of the cholera patients with a few helpers. Every morning the Sisters went to the cholera hospital.

"Mother Catherine was in her true element all this time. She would not allow herself a moment's rest. As the hospital did not provide certain little luxuries which she considered might contribute to the comfort of the convalescents, she set out every morning, with a basket under her nun's cloak laden with supplies. She also took

with her large lawn handkerchiefs to wipe off the ice-cold perspiration, which exuded from the faces and limbs of the agonizing. In the evening she gathered these handkerchiefs, brought them home, washed them herself, so as to have them ready for the next day, nor would she allow anyone to do this for her or to help her; no, there was no use in offering or entreating. Mother Catherine in this would have her way.' Her helpers were indefatigable and devoted. One of the Sisters took the contagion; but in a few days, she was on her feet again, attending the patients. While the pestilence raged, the Sisters remained at their post.

"In Cork, the panic among the poor people was terrific. They had no confidence in the doctors, and refused to go to the hospital for cholera patients. It was only when they heard that the 'walking nuns' (that was the name some of the poor people called the Sisters of Charity) would nurse them in the hospital, that they consented to take advantage of it. The heroic devotion of the Sisters in Dublin and in Cork was a great joy and consolation to their Mother, who, in 1831, was struck down with illness, and had to retire to Sandymount, and give up all active work. She was confined to her couch for years, and suffered weary pain. Her patience and cheerfulness during those years of bodily torture were a wonderful lesson to the Sisters. She was able to work with her head, if not her body, and to direct her children. Indeed, she did perhaps more for her congregation with her head than she could have done with her hands. She devoted great attention to drawing up the rules of the Order. The constitutions which cost so much time and thought and labor, have been the means of carrying the Sisters of Charity through their arduous work for many a generation."

A great wish of Mother Aikenhead's heart was to

have a hospital in Dublin. Many people in Dublin doubted the wisdom of that purpose but she knew how much the poor dreaded hospitals and she knew that Sisters could manage a hospital so as to win the hearts of the poor and therefore provide proper treatment. She went very wisely about the execution of her plan. As a preliminary she sent three Sisters to Paris to be trained in the care of the sick. This was almost a half century before Florence Nightingale's training of nurses. They remained for a year at the hospital La Pitie. Friends gave Mother Aikenhead the means to buy a fine old residence on Stephen's Green and this was converted into a hospital. It is still standing and has been a favorite place of pilgrimage for physicians in visits to Dublin as the first of modern hospitals. It had but twelve beds but they were soon filled with female patients. The first operation in the hospital was on a poor little boy who lay in the Reverend Mother's lap while it was being performed. In spite of criticisms of the undertaking on the score that it was not work suited for nuns, patients crowded to them in such numbers that the house next door had to be purchased and transformed into wards. The community continued to grow and to spread and Mother Aikenhead had to share the responsibility with the mother superiors of the various houses. She used to say sometimes, "I am just like the old woman who lived in a shoe, I have so many children I don't know what to do."

Stories from those early days show how tender-hearted she was toward the poor and toward her Sisters when they needed her sympathy. On rainy days when any of those working in connection with any of the houses got wet,—and I need scarcely say that Ireland can be a pretty wet place at times,—she always insisted on their changing their wet clothes. If they were those who came to do work



around the place, they always had to have something warm to eat. Drivers of carts who brought things to the houses had always to be properly refreshed. Mother Aikenhead gave special directions that their horses should be cared for.

One of the members of the order in the early days has described some details of the work of the Sisters that will provide the best idea of not only what they were trying to do but were actually accomplishing. "When I was employed on the visitation of the poor, I took cases rather enthusiastically. On one occasion I got a call to a poor woman whom I found in a cellar not easy to reach on account of the darkness of the passage leading down to it. She was apparently in a dying state, lying on a straw pallet, with a dead child beside her, and other children playing on the flags near the bed. The poor mother was so ill and helpless she was unable to remove the dead child; nor did there appear to be anyone to look after her or the children. It was Sunday and none of the neighbors had come to the wretched abode. I was greatly struck by the state of destitution and helplessness I found the family in; and so with my companion I tried to remove the little corpse, and make the poor sufferer more comfortable by giving her some nourishment. All this took a considerable time, and caused me to be beyond my appointed hour at the convent. On my return I went at once to the Rev. Mother, who was staying at that house and not at the hospital. She smiled when she noticed my distress and woe. 'Well, my heart, what has happened?' she asked, 'O Mother,' I said, 'I came across such a distressing case that I could not leave without doing something for the sufferer,' and then I related to her what I had witnessed. She looked earnestly at me, and said, 'My child, what would you wish to do for them?' 'O Mother, if the poor woman could be taken into St.

Vincent's Hospital to save her life for her little family!' 'By all means, my child' she said, 'go back and bring her yourself to St. Vincent's. Tell Mother Rectress it is the Sunday of the Good Samaritan, and that I send her this poor creature in commemoration of the parable of the day.' I did not lose much time in flying back to my poor woman and doing as I was desired. She was received into St. Vincent's Hospital and restored to her family. But the kind and genial manner in which the act was done was long remembered by me with gratitude."

No wonder that prominent visitors to Dublin wanted to see Mother Aikenhead. Dr. Pusey was among the visitors who paid a number of visits to her. It will be recalled that with Newman and Keble he was one of the leaders of the Oxford movement. He expressed a wish to witness a religious profession and was much impressed by it. Dr., afterwards cardinal, Wiseman, who came to Dublin in 1839, had a long interview with Mother Aikenhead. Gerald Griffin the poet who lived for a while here in America had a sister in the community and visited the hospital to meet the Superior. James Clarence Mangan the Irish poet came as a patient and appreciated the change from his miserable garret. As he was laid in bed he exclaimed, "Oh the luxury of clean sheets!" He was a troublesome patient but the Sisters knew how to excuse the waywardness of genius and Mother Aikenhead herself said in extenuation, "These poor poets have nerves at every pore."

Mother Aikenhead had a saving sense of humor. She herself occupied every moment of her time. She was always doing something. She wanted people to use the talents that had been confided to them. She would repeat, "We don't want children here, we want young women who have sense and know how to use it." Those who did foolish or stupid things under the idea that they

were cultivating piety she called "holy pokers." She used to say, "I don't want to have my nuns holy pokers."

She liked to see the young Sisters particularly busy and happy. She used to remind them often that God loves a cheerful giver and that if they were happy they must try and make others happy too. She took an intense part in the joys and sorrows of her large family. They grew almost out of all bounds. The community was called to undertake work in Waterford, Kilkenny, Clonmel, and they organized a blind asylum in Merrion. All this was not accomplished without friction. Even Sisters are only human beings. Read St. Teresa's letters and appreciate how much of the obstinate human animal may be left in religious. St. Vincent's Hospital was the focus of opposition. The work there was very dear to Mother's Aikenhead's heart. Opposition came from within. Unsubmissive Spirits tried to get the younger Sisters to express dissent from the work carried on at St. Vincent's. The efforts made to stir up trouble led to several members leaving the community; but they were very few in numbers and the great mass of Sisters clung to Mother Aikenhead and their fidelity made up to her for the pain and anguish of mind she had to go through before she knew what the extent of the danger was.

In spite of all her work and trials Mother Aikenhead lived on to be seventy-one years of age. Mother Catherine Walsh, her lifelong friend and companion, lived to be nearly eighty-one and her death was a severe trial to Mother Aikenhead. The congregation which they had founded together continued to spread until there were literally thousands of Irish Sisters of Charity doing all sorts of good work in England and Ireland as well as in Australia. Besides St. Vincent's Hospital, Stephen's

Green, Dublin, Ireland, there is St. Patrick's Hospital, Wellington Road, Cork, founded in 1870; the Children's Hospital, Upper Temple Street, Dublin, founded 1876; St. Mary's Hospital, Cappagh, County Dublin, founded in 1908, which has a tubercular department opened in 1921; there is St. Joseph's Hospice for the Dying, Hackley, London, founded in 1900 and such other charities as St. Mary Magdalen's Asylum, Donnybrook, County Dublin, founded 1833; St. Mary's Asylum for the Blind, Merrion, County Dublin, founded 1858; St. Joseph's Female Orphanage, Mt. Joy St., Dublin, founded 1856; a convalescent home, Milden, Blackrack, County Dublin, founded 1866; the Boys' Industrial School, Kilkenny, founded 1880; St. Margaret's Home, Rockferry, Cheshire, England, founded 1890, and above all and worthy of mention the convent at Foxford, County Mayo, founded 1891.

Into this little town of Foxford in one of the poorest districts of the County Mayo, (God help us!) that I know so well because my own folks come from not far away, the Irish Sisters of Charity came some thirty-five years ago to teach and they have transformed the place. What the people needed above all was something to give them occupation. A falls in the river Moy provided cheap power and the Sisters actually proceeded to establish a woolen mill to furnish employment to some of the young men and a large number of the young women and they have succeeded in making a thrifty and model little town of it. Their blankets are famous, as I have good reason to know, for we have some of them in the house, but they are only like the spirit of the place just as perfect as they could be made. Initial capital in the form of £7000 came from the Congested Districts Board, accompanied by an educational grant of £1500 for the training of workers. The expert business knowledge was

furnished by Mr. J. C. Smith, the proprietor of the Caledon Woolen Mills, who, though a Protestant, took a keen interest in this novel development of Catholic charity. As years went by the mill extended, keeping pace in equipment. At present it employs 200 persons. Sixty tasty cottages have been built to house those families which depend entirely on the mill. There are men's and women's clubs and a spacious hall in which the workers' orchestra and dramatic society entertain their friends. The author of the *Life of Mother Aikenhead* says: "The latest balance sheet tells us that, within the year £18,000 has been distributed in wages (some \$90,000), and £14,000 (\$70,000) expended locally on purchases of wool. The discipline of thrift has been accepted by the workers; out of their surplus earnings they have invested in the factory a total of £14,000, on which a handsome interest is paid. Those among them of older standing and higher grade have accounts with the bank, the younger folk entrust their savings to the Post Office."

In Australia the first foundation was made in 1857 and the same year St. Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, was founded. The Irish Sisters of Charity have a series of hospitals and schools in Australasia. St. Vincent's Hospital, Lismore, in the midst of the flourishing river districts of New South Wales, has a great future. St. Vincent's Hospital, Bathurst, founded in 1922, is in the center of a rich farming district and was entirely free from debt on the opening day. St. Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne, in Victoria, founded in 1898, has now become the great general hospital of the city in the words of the Governor-General of Australia, "a great national institution." Mt. St. Evin's Hospital was founded in 1913. St. Vincent's Hospital in Toowoomba, founded in 1922 at a cost of nearly \$200,000, is intended to accommodate 125 patients and is equipped to the best possible



advantage. In Tasmania St. Joseph's Orphanage, Hobart, founded in 1879, is training orphans for useful employments of many kinds.

To the very ends of the world at the antipodes Mother Aikenhead's work has extended itself and young Irish women have given up everything, under the influence of her example and under her rule, for the sake of doing all that they can for others so that life may be happier for them.

Another of these young Irish women who devoted herself to the care of the poor and the suffering in Dublin where such work was needed so much was Catherine McAuley who as the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy is usually known as Mother McAuley. She and Mother Aikenhead were born the same year, 1787. Like Mother Aikenhead she was a lady of great personal attraction. She received her first lessons in charity from her father who wanted to do everything he could for the poor though his devotion to them was the cause of much family friction since her mother wanted to shine in society and father's taste for association with the poor disturbed her. He died when his daughter Catherine was but seven, but the memory of his charity stayed with her all her life. An uncle and aunt adopted Catherine and learned to love her deeply. They were Protestants but through her influence and example became Catholics and they left her a large fortune which made her independent and she resolved to devote herself and her money to the care of the poor. Her decision made a number of people declare that she lacked the social sense of the rest of the family and took after her father who did not care to associate with the best people but liked to be with the lower classes. They dismissed her from further consideration with the expression that she was lacking not only in taste but in refinement.

She found many conditions in Dublin to improve. The children needed instruction so she gathered them for that purpose. She taught them how to do various kinds of needlework, plain and fancy knitting, and managed to sell the articles they made so that they might buy a little better clothing. She was very much interested in poor girls who worked out as domestic servants and tried to protect them and shelter them from the temptations that were round them. All this she had been doing before her uncle and aunt died. When wealth came she proceeded to center these works in a home so that they might be better done. Her idea was to establish a sort of society of secular ladies who between the period of leaving school and settling in life might without inconvenience to their families spend a few hours daily in instructing the poor or in interesting young girls in the better things of life. It was only after her house was built and it proved to have something of the appearance of a convent and the ladies who assisted began more than half in jest to call each other Sister, that "the foundress saw that a higher mind than hers had planned an institute different from what she had contemplated."

This was the very simple beginning of the Sisters of Mercy. It gradually came to be a religious community but not without opposition. She was misrepresented not only by her family but even by priests and high ecclesiastics. Some of her Protestant neighbors in Baggot Street where her house was situated were indignant that a work of charity should be undertaken in their neighborhood. Most Reverend Dr. Murray, the Archbishop of Dublin, who had been for years a warm friend, expressed his displeasure with her for changing her institute into a convent. She wrote that she was willing to follow whatever plan might be laid down for her. Fortunately there were not lacking good friends to encourage her in

her work. Among the staunchest of these was Daniel O'Connell. He was greatly attracted by Miss McAuley's devotion to the poor and her eminent good sense. When in 1827 she began to entertain the poor children of the neighborhood on Christmas Day O'Connell presided at the first monster dinner and continued to do so whenever he was in Dublin.

After a time the archbishop of Dublin realized that the finger of God seemed to be in the work of Miss McAuley and her associates. He formally encouraged their organization as a religious community. It was decided that the foundress and two of her companions should make their novitiate in a Presentation Convent. The reason for this was that Nano Nagle in founding the Presentation Order had hoped to establish a religious community that would devote itself to the teaching of poor children and the visiting of the poor and their aid in various ways. This community had seen fit to become some fifteen years before this an inclosed order and now Miss McAuley and her Sisters proposed to carry out in fullness Nano Nagle's idea. The visitation of the sick in their homes has remained to this day one of the special works of the Sisters of Mercy. After a year and three months in the novitiate, Sister Mary Catherine as she now became, and her two companions, were professed and returned to Baggot Street where in the meantime her companions had been carrying on this good work. The archbishop appointed her superior though she had hoped not to be put in authority. She petitioned at least not to be called Reverend Mother but she was told that "there ought to be at least one mother in every house."

The following year, January, 1832, seven of the ladies who had carried on the establishment in Mother McAuley's absence, were clothed in the habit of the little institute. That habit has remained unchanged. The

numbers continued to grow. After a time she obtained permission to visit the wards of several Dublin hospitals with her nuns to bring consolation to the patients. This was an innovation not looked upon very graciously by the hospital authorities at first, but it was very greatly appreciated by the poor sufferers in the hospitals and before long by those in charge of them also. Patients became ever so much more tractable. Mother McAuley was very anxious that the Sisters should have a hospital of their own but her wish was not carried out in her lifetime though the great Mater Misericordiæ Hospital, Dublin, was founded not long after her death and hundreds of hospitals since. During an epidemic of cholera in 1833 she established herself with her Sisters in the cholera hospitals. The stricken population in panic was afraid to enter the hospitals. There were wild rumors that the patients were all dying and that the doctors were not only not helping them but hastening their death. The authorities and even the archbishop could not reassure the people. It was only when they heard that the Sisters of Mercy were working with the doctors that their wild terror disappeared. The cholera left hundreds of widows and orphans for the Sisters to provide for. During the early years of the foundation a great many of the members of the community died because of the hard work and the exposure to various epidemic diseases with regard to which at that time no one knew the proper precautions. No less than fifteen of the nuns lost their lives in the first six years of the existence of the community. Mother McAuley was terribly stricken by these losses for she loved all her children with a mother's love.

The order continued to grow in spite of difficulties and deaths and other convents had to be founded. The first branch was at Kingstown near Dublin in 1834. Then followed St. Joseph's at Tullamore in 1836. St. Joseph's,

Charleville, was founded that same year, and St. Mary's of the Isle in Cork in 1837. Foundations were made at St. Leo's in Carlow, at St. Anne's, Booterstown, and St. Mary's, Limerick. Then came the first foundation out of Ireland at Bermondsey, London, in 1839, followed by St. Mary's in Birmingham.

That same year came the news that the rules and constitutions of her order had been conferred in Rome. This was a great favor as the community was only ten years old but the consolation it afforded was short-lived. At the age of fifty-four just when her work was beginning to make itself felt widely, Mother McAuley died. Her loss was a great blow but her associates, filled with her spirit, trained under her direction, animated by her charity, continued the work. In the late '40's Mother Warde and her companions came to America and provided much needed assistance for the Irish who had emigrated to America in such large numbers after the famine. Following the Irish emigrants wherever they went the Sisters went to Australia. Schools were organized, hospitals were founded, novices were received, everywhere the order showed the life it possessed and continued to grow. South America soon had its houses of the community. At the present time there are well above 20,000 Sisters of Mercy throughout the world doing the work that Mother McAuley founded, devoting themselves to the care of the poor and the suffering in every way. It is thought that by the time her community is 100 years old in 1931 there will be over 25,000 of them.

Some of the great hospitals of this country are under their charge. It was in Mercy Hospital, Chicago, that Dr. John B. Murphy did much of his great work which English and American authorities in surgery went so far as to declare constituted the best surgery that has been done anywhere in the world for the past 300 years.



Mercy Hospital, Pittsburgh, is one of the most important hospitals of the country, and Mr. Frick, the millionaire steel magnate, felt that he had to recognize its great power for good by leaving it as one of his residuary legatees. Misericordia Hospital, Philadelphia, is another of their great foundations.

These two orders, the Irish Sisters of Charity and the Sisters of Mercy, represent the pioneers in the reaction against the awful social abuses which existed at the beginning of the nineteenth century and which made our hospitals and other institutions for the poor such satires on humanity. The world has been accustomed to attribute the origin of this great reaction to Florence Nightingale, but Florence Nightingale herself proclaimed how much she owed to the spirit which had been introduced by the Irish Sisters. A few years ago a series of letters written by Miss Nightingale to Father Manning as he then was, afterwards Cardinal Manning, were published in the *Dublin Review* (1919). In these she pleaded with him to secure for her the privilege of being trained in one of the houses of the Sisters in Ireland. She did not want to go as a visitor nor even as a postulant or novice. She wanted to receive the actual training of a Sister. She fondly imagined that it would be possible for her to wear the habit of the sisterhood for three or more months and to all intents and appearances be a Sister, a regular member of the community, though all the while remaining a Protestant, with only the Mother Superior and the chaplain in the secret. Of course the idea was entirely out of the question but it serves to show her attitude toward the Sisters.

In June, 1852, she wrote to Father Manning: "For what training is there compared with that of a Catholic nun? Those ladies who are not Sisters have not the chastened temper, the Christian grace, the accomplished

loveliness and energy of the regular nun. I have seen something of different kinds of nuns and am no longer young, and do not speak from enthusiasm but from experience. There is nothing like the training (in these days) which the Sacred Heart or the Order of St. Vincent gives to women." She evidently anticipated some opposition from her folks at home and confessed quite frankly that she had not ventured to broach the subject. "I have not my people's consent for this and I do not think I should go without it. I was in disgrace with them for a twelvemonth for going to Kaiserswerth (the house of deaconesses in Germany)." Her experience there, she knew, was so valuable that it was worth even the family friction that it brought with it. Though she mentions that her sister was out of humor with her for over a year because of it, she was evidently ready for a similar experience, if only it would serve her as well in the preparation for what she now felt was her life work.

In seeking definite preparations and training for her life work—the care of the sick and the needy, Miss Nightingale not only heard of but manifestly had seen some of the good work done by both the Sisters of Mercy and Sisters of Charity in Dublin. She mixes them up somewhat and in one of her earlier letters to Father Manning urged him to find out "whether they would take me in the hospital of St. (*sic*) Stephen's on the Green of Dublin (which is served by the Sisters of Mercy) for three months *as I am*." Sometime afterwards she wrote, "I really don't know what I am going to do, but if I do not see you again St. Vincent's Hospital, St. Stephen's Green, is the place for me."

Of course under the circumstances Father Manning could not secure her the privileges that she asked for, but he kept her in mind and when the awful breakdown in the care for the wounded soldiers occurred in the Crimea

—when hundreds of soldiers were left for more than a week in their clothes without anyone to tend them except some brother wounded soldiers to give them an occasional drink, when they lay festering in their wounds and their excretions and at last the story of the unspeakable conditions leaked out to England, to give the nation a thrill of horror—Father Manning wrote to Mary Stanley, the sister of the well-known Anglican Dean of St. Paul's, London, "Why will not Florence Nightingale give herself to the great work?" Mary Stanley and Florence Nightingale were very dear and close friends.

As we know Florence Nightingale did give herself to the work and with her, at a day's notice, by her special request, went five Sisters of Mercy from Bermondsey, a branch of the Sisters of Mercy from Dublin who had come over to London only a few years before. These Bermondsey nuns who, as she herself has said were among the most faithful of Miss Nightingale's assistants, remained with her until the end of the war. When they were leaving on April 29, 1865, she wrote, "Your going home is the greatest blow yet, but God's blessing and all my love and gratitude go with you as you well know."

How much their presence meant to her may be gathered from a letter which Miss Nightingale at Balaklava wrote to the Reverend Mother at Scutari asking her if possible to get additional nuns from England. She concludes her letter thus, "I cannot express to you, dear Rev. Mother, the gratitude which I and the whole country feel to you for your goodness. You have been one of our chief mainstays, and without you I do not know what would have become of the work. With love to all my Sisters, believe me, dear Rev. Mother, ever yours affectionately and gratefully."

There was very bitter feeling in England at this time with regard to Catholics. The English hierarchy had

been reëstablished only shortly before and this had caused an outburst of bigotry. It was very difficult for intolerant Protestants to think of nuns occupying a more or less official position and taking care of English soldiers in the Crimea. An ultra-Protestant pamphlet appeared pointing out the absurdity of "Catholic nuns transferring their allegiance from the Pope of Rome to a Protestant lady." The tidings of these rumors and circulars reached the Crimea where they caused no end of merriment among the parties most nearly concerned. The intimate cordial relations which existed between Miss Nightingale and the Sisters may be gathered from the fact that after hearing of this pamphlet on the Pope, one of the Sisters playfully addressed Miss Nightingale as "Your Holiness," and the latter retorted by dubbing the Sister Superior a cardinal. A little later Miss Nightingale writing from the new encampment to the Sisters at Scutari said, "I want my cardinal very much up here. The Sisters are all quite well and cheerful, thank God for it. They have made their hut look quite tidy and put up with the cold and inconveniences with the utmost self-abnegation. Everything even the ink freezes in our hut every night." Is it surprising that when one of the nuns had a dangerous attack of fever Miss Nightingale insisted on nursing her herself?

When in 1856 peace came the wounded had still to be nursed but Mother Superior with shattered health and imperative home duties in England had to return. "Work away merrily!" were her parting words to those whom she left behind at Balaklava, and Scutari. Florence Nightingale wrote her a farewell letter. "You know that I shall do everything I can for the Sisters whom you have left me. I will care for them as if they were my own children. But it will not be like you. I do not presume to express praise or gratitude to you, Rev. Mother,

because it would look as though I thought you had done this work, not unto God, but unto me. *You were far above me in fitness for the general superintendency, in worldly talent of administration, and far more in the spiritual qualifications which God values in a Superior; my being placed over you was my misfortune, not my fault. What you have done for the work no one can ever say. I do not presume to give you any other tribute but my tears. But I should be glad that the Bishop of Southwark should know, and Dr. Manning, that you were valued here as you deserve, and that the gratitude of the army is yours.*"

The other Sisters remained in the Crimea until the last of the wounded could be evacuated to England. Then they came back to devote themselves for the rest of their lives to the care of the ailing poor in the London slums who were quite as much in need of their services as the poor soldiers in the Crimea had been though so much public attention was not called to their condition. The Sisters looked for no reward but the satisfaction of work well done not for any earthly motive but for a divine incentive. "The Sisters had from the first refused all remuneration for their services; and when, after their return to England, Lord Panmure wrote to 'express to the Sisterhood the sense entertained by Her Majesty's Government of the devotion displayed by them in attending the sick and wounded soldiers in the British hospitals in the East,' and to offer them a sum of money, the Nuns generously declined it for themselves, expressing at the same time a willingness, which the Government readily gratified, to distribute it among the poor and sick of their own district, preferring for themselves to be rewarded only by His grace and love, for whose sake alone they had undertaken a difficult and a noble work."

These then were the missionaries of the spirit who,



organized under the inspiration of Mother Mary Aikenhead and Mother Catherine McAuley, went forth from Ireland to do the good work their hands found to do wherever it might be and inevitably to encounter others who flocked around them and wanted to help them in the work. Both orders have grown and are still growing. All over the world literally nearly a thousand young women every year ask to be allowed to become members of the Sisters of Mercy in order that they may share the training given by the good Sisters which Florence Nightingale appreciated so much and wanted to secure for herself. As a result they have that broadened character and sympathy that makes life lived for others the happiest that can be on earth. Cheerful and light-hearted as their foundress had suggested, they go on their way doing their work. Still they visit the houses of the poor and take care of young working women, still they visit the prisons and maintain their hospitals as well as teach the children of the poor, and in recent years when religion in education has come to be recognized as such an important desideratum, they have organized high schools and colleges for women that have done much to stem the tide of the modern paganism. Women are so much more susceptible to irreligious teaching than men are, that this organization of Sisters' colleges has been extremely important and represents a wonderful new development in American education.

What their visiting of prisoners and prisons may mean is very well illustrated by a passage from Carlo de Fornaro's "A Modern Purgatory" which is a description of his year's imprisonment on Blackwell's Island. The well-known cartoonist was sentenced for criminal libel against the late President Diaz of Mexico. He refused to withdraw his expressions with regard to President Diaz though recantation would have secured immediate

release, and insisted on serving his time pending appeal. He described the visits to the prisons of a number of clergymen and emphasizes how little those visits meant for the prisoners. It was quite a different matter, however, with the Sisters of Mercy. They brought real consolation to the hearts of the prisoners and meant ever so much for bringing about a change of heart in them. Fornaro said, "The Sisters of Mercy appear every month or so; they are loved and venerated by the convicts. I have noticed that, unlike the other missionaries who take care of our spiritual welfare, the Sisters never ask a convict: 'What crime did you commit?' but always: 'How long must you serve?' 'Have you mother, sister, wife, or children?' 'What can we do to help them?' The Sisters never argue, discuss or theorize about religion, but they help the convicts in the only practical, useful and efficient ways; they visit and appeal to judges and District Attorneys; they call on the families of the convicts and their friends; they furnish money to needy relatives and to the men themselves when they come penniless out of prison.

"The Protestant clergymen, the Catholic priests, the Rabbis, the missionaries, as a rule talk only to the men of their own faith. But the Sisters of Mercy speak to everybody, no matter to what race or faith they may belong. They never inquire into a man's crimes; all they ask is to be told of his troubles and worries and to be allowed to do what they can to relieve them.

"One of the Sisters is said to be responsible for the elimination of stripes in Sing Sing."

The Sisters in their visits to the prisons on the Island were doing exactly as Mother McAuley directed her assistants and later her Sisters to do when she was founding her institute. Her great rule was, never ask questions. Do things for people and if they want to confide in you,

well and good, but she felt that it was very easy for people to be led astray out of almost idle curiosity. She expressed her creed of service in a few simple words. In writing about her for *The Trained Nurse and Hospital Review* (New York, March, 1923) as one of the great predecessors of and pathfinders for Florence Nightingale, I quoted her own words on the subject of visiting hospitals and ventured to comment on them: Great tenderness must be employed to relieve the corporal distress first, and endeavor to promote the cleanliness, ease and comfort of the patient, since we are ever most disposed to receive admonition or instruction from those who show compassion for us." The structure of that sentence is typical of the way in which Mother McAuley did her work. In the last portion of it she identifies herself with the poor by using the first person plural "we," that is, all of us "are ever most disposed to receive admonition and instruction from those who show compassion for us." She felt that a great deal of good could be done for the poor by proper advice, and admonition, but appreciated very well their minimum of regard for the counsel of those who offer them a little help and a great deal of advice. When you have done people physical good, it is easy for them to believe that your advice is also meant to do them good, though without the preliminary beneficence, they may feel that advice, which is so cheap, is just an imposition.

There are over 7,500 Sisters of Mercy in the United States at the present time. Most of the hundred hospitals and sanatoria which are under the charge of the Sisters in this country are of as high an order in organization and equipment as it is possible for them to be in the environment in which they find themselves. Some of them are among our greatest hospitals. Mother Warde trained under the eye of the foundress herself in Ireland, pos-

sessed something of her greatness of soul and her supreme devotion to the cause of the poor. She came to this country at a time when in the midst of the Know Nothing movement bigotry ran high but she was fearless and forward looking and ready to face danger even when there was serious risk of life. It is no wonder that the Sisters of Mercy following in the footsteps of Mother Warde have accomplished so much for the country. The spirit of Mother McAuley still prevails and it is not surprising that Florence Nightingale was taken with the work accomplished by them and the noble temper in which it was done. Her association with Mother McAuley's daughters in the Crimea when unfortunately she had not been able to secure the training from them in their house in Dublin which she had longed for and planned for so cordially, gave her lifelong memories of their beautiful characters and their supreme devotion to those who needed their care. [From volume "The World's Debt to the Irish," by James J. Walsh, Stratford Company, Boston, 1926.]

# Sisters in the Crimean War

## *Angels of Hospital and Field*

By SISTER MARY ALOYSIUS

THE narrative of the Crimean War has found its place in European history; and the story of its victories and defeats, of its glories and ghastly sufferings, have been eloquently told by both poets and historians. Yet, though the picture seemed complete in its interest and pathos, the following pages cast some new lights and darker shades on the incidents to which they refer, and impart to the whole an additional interest.

They tell of the hospitals—Scutari, Koulali, and Balaklava—filled to overflowing with the wounded and dying victims of the battlefield. And they also tell of many who were not the victims of shot or shell or saber wound, but of the gaunt specter of cholera or fever contracted by exposure in the trenches.

To minister to them was truly a noble field for the exercise of heroic Christian charity; and one that appealed to all that was generous and self-sacrificing in the nation. From Ireland and England, heroic Nuns went forth to minister to those dying soldiers, seeking and receiving no recompense save that which a God of charity has promised for what is done even for the least of His little ones. And the graves of Sisters Winifred and Elizabeth, still pointed out on the heights of Balaklava, speak with touching pathos of the character of their heroism.

Letter addressed by the Superioress of the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland to the Vicar-General, the Very Rev. Dr. Yore:



VERY REV. SIR,

We have heard with great pain of the sufferings of our countrymen engaged as soldiers in the East in the services of the Queen. We know it must be difficult, if not impossible, to procure for them skillful nurses speaking their own language and sympathizing with their habits and feelings, and that care and attention in a strange land which would be so well supplied at home. Attendance on the sick, as you are aware, is part of the work of our Institute, and sad experience amongst the poor has convinced us that, even with the advantages of medical aid, many valuable lives are lost for want of careful nursing. It has occurred to us that, as the French Sisters of Charity have been found so useful and acceptable to their countrymen in the hospitals of Constantinople, we, too, might render similar service to our countrymen, and help to mitigate their sufferings in the English hospitals.

We, therefore, Rev. Sir, through you, and with your permission, in the absence of the Archbishop, beg leave to offer our services to the proper authorities to act as nurses in the care of the sick and wounded under the direction of the medical officers. Our services must necessarily be gratuitous. Only let us be transferred to the scene of our labors and be maintained there, and the survivors brought back to our own country.

Hoping to receive a favorable reply,

I am, respectfully and sincerely,

SISTER MARY VINCENT WHITTY.

The other letter, from Dr. Yore to the Secretary of War, approving of the proposal, was as follows:

I have just received the enclosed letter from the Sisters of Mercy, making an offer of their services to attend our sick and wounded soldiers in the East. They have addressed the letter to me, in my character of Vicar-General and charged with the administration of the diocese in the absence of the Archbishop. I need not say that their proposal has my hearty concurrence, and if

the Government will accept of it I shall be happy to give my best services in carrying it into effect. I do not anticipate that we shall be able at present to send more than from ten to twenty Nuns, and it will be necessary that they be conveyed to the scene of their labors and maintained there, and that they be accompanied by a chaplain, who should continue during their stay and return with them, receiving the usual appointments of a chaplain.

When all the letters were read each Sister went to the choir to visit the Blessed Sacrament, a custom which is usual after lecture or any notable event—and on their return any Sisters who wished to go were told to put their names into a little box left on the mantelpiece to receive them.

When we reached Scutari we were shown to our quarters, consisting of one little room, not in a very agreeable locality. However, we were quite satisfied none better could be found, and for this little nook we were very thankful.

Of course, we expected to be sent to the wards at once. Sister M. Agnes and the writer were sent to a store to sort clothes that had been eaten by the rats; Rev. Mother and Sister M. Elizabeth either to the kitchen or to another store. In a dark, damp, gloomy shed we set to work and did the best we could; but, indeed, the destruction accomplished by the rats was something wonderful. On the woolen goods they had feasted sumptuously. They were running about us in all directions; we begged of the sergeant to leave the door open that we might make our escape if they attacked us. Our home rats would run if you "hushed" them; but you might "hush" away, and the Scutari rats would not take the least notice.

During my stay in the stores I saw numberless funerals pass by the window. Cholera was raging, and how I did

wish to be in the wards amongst the poor dying soldiers! Before I leave the stores I must mention that Sister M. Agnes and myself thought the English nobility must have emptied their wardrobes and linen stores to send out bandages for the wounded—the most beautiful under-clothing, the finest cambric sheets, with merely a scissors run here and there through them to ensure their being used for no other purpose. And such large bales, too; some from the Queen's Palace, with the Royal monogram beautifully worked. Whoever sent out these immense bales thought nothing too good for the poor soldiers. And they were right—nothing was too good for them. And now good-by stores and good-by rats; for I was to be in the cholera wards in the morning.

Where shall I begin, or how can I ever describe my first day in the hospital at Scutari? Vessels were arriving, and the orderlies carrying the poor fellows, who, with their wounds and frost-bites, had been tossing about on the Black Sea for two or three days, and sometimes more. Where were they to go? Not an available bed. They were laid on the floor one after another, till the beds were emptied of those dying of cholera and every other disease. Many died immediately after being brought in—their moans would pierce the heart—the taking of them in and out of the vessels must have increased their pain.

The look of agony in those poor dying faces will never leave my heart. They may well be called "the Martyrs of the Crimea." We went round with hot wine, and relieved them in every way as far as it was possible. The beds were by degrees getting empty. If stretchers were bringing in some from the vessels, others were going out with the dead. We were able to get the men on the floor to bed; then, of course, we could see after them better.

The cholera was of the very worst type—the attacked

man lasted only four or five hours. Oh! those dreadful cramps; you might as well try to bend a piece of iron as to move the joints. The medical staff did their best, and daily, hourly risked their own lives, with little or no success. At last everyone seemed to be getting paralyzed, and the orderlies indifferent as to life or death.

The usual remedies ordered by the doctors were stuping and poultices of mustard. They were very anxious to try chloroform, but they did not trust anyone with it except the Sisters. Rev. Mother was a splendid nurse, and had the most perfect way of doing everything. For instance, the stuping seems such a small thing, but if not properly done it did more harm than good. I will give her way. You have a large tub of boiling water, blankets torn in squares, and a piece of canvas with a running at each end to hold a stick. The blankets were put into the boiling water, lifted out with a tongs and put into the canvas, when an orderly at each end wrung the flannel out so dry that not a drop of water remained, before a preparation of chloroform was sprinkled on it, and it was applied to the stomach. Then followed a spoonful of brandy, and immediately after a small piece of ice, to try and settle the stomach, and finally rubbing with mustard, and even with turpentine. Rarely, very rarely, did any remedy succeed; and, as a rule, it was not the weak or delicate who were attacked, but the strong and healthy. One day a fine young fellow, the picture of health and strength, was carried on a stretcher to my ward. I said to the orderlies, "I hope we shall be able to bring *him* through." I set to work with the usual remedies; but the doctor shook his head, and said: "I am afraid it's all no use, Sister." When the orderlies, poor fellows, were tired, I set to work myself, and kept it on till nearly the end—but you might as well rub iron; no heat, no move-

ment from his joints. He lived about the usual time—four or five hours.

A hurried line to my Convent home, St. Leo's, Carlow, ran as follows:

SCUTARI HOSPITAL,  
*January, 1855.*

MY DEAREST REV. MOTHER,

You are, no doubt, very anxious for some news of your two dear ones now so far away. I am here, at the place so often talked of. And what am I doing? If you could only get one look at this dreadful place it would never leave your mind or heart; but you would be consoled to see the Sisters in the midst of so much suffering. The hospital consists of long corridors, as far as your eye can reach, with beds at each side; and, as I write, poor fellows, both wounded and frost-bitten, lie on the floor. We are in the wards late and early. When we go to our apartment, to get a couple of hours' rest, we groan in anguish at the thought of all we leave undone.

Pray, pray much for us, my own dear Mother.

In great haste,

Your ever fond,

M. ALOYSIUS.

I really grudge the few minutes I have taken to write this—don't expect letters.

Week in, week out, the cholera went on. The same remedies were continued, though almost always to fail. However, while there was life there was hope, and we kept on the warm applications to the last. When it came near the end, the patients got into a sort of collapse, out of which they did not rally.

We begged the orderlies, waiting to take them to the dead house, to wait a little lest they might not be dead; and with great difficulty we prevailed on them to make the least delay. As a rule, the orderlies drank freely,



"to drown their grief," they said. I must say their position was a very hard one—their work always increasing—and such work; death around them on every side; their own lives in continual danger—it was almost for them a continuation of the field of battle.

The poor wounded men brought in out of the vessels were in a dreadful state of dirt; and so weak that whatever cleaning they got had to be done cautiously. Oh, the state of those fine fellows, so worn out with fatigue, so full of vermin! Most or all of them required spoon-feeding. We had wine, sago, arrowroot. Indeed, I think there was everything in the stores; but it was so hard to get them. We went every morning with the orderlies to get the wine, brandy and other things ordered by the doctors: we gave them out according to their directions. The medical officers were kind enough to say they had no one to depend on but the Nuns. Sometimes, if allowed, the man might drink in one draught the brandy ordered for the day, which, of course, would do him great harm. An orderly officer took the rounds of the wards every night, to see that all was right. He was expected by the orderlies, and the moment he raised the latch one cried out: "All right, your honor." Many a time I said "All wrong." The poor officer, of course, went his way; and one could scarcely blame him for not entering those wards, so filled with pestilence, the air so dreadful that to breathe it might cost him his life. And then what could he do even if he did come. I remember one day an officer's orderly being brought in—a dreadful case of cholera; and so devoted was his master that he came in every half hour to see him, and stood over him in the bed as if it was only a cold he had; the poor fellow died after a few hours' illness. I hope his devoted master escaped. I never heard.

It was said that the graves were not made deep

enough, and that the very air was putrid. As there were no coffins, canvas and blankets had to suffice.

I must say something of my poor frost-bitten patients. The men who came from the "Front," as they called it, had only thin linen suits—no other clothing to keep out the Crimean frost of 1854–1855. When they were carried in on the stretchers, which conveyed so many to their last resting-place, their clothes had to be cut off. In most cases the flesh and clothes were frozen together; and, as for the feet, the boots had to be cut off bit by bit—the flesh coming off with them—many pieces of the flesh I have seen remain in the boot. Poultices were applied with some oil brushed over them. In the morning, when these were removed—can I ever forget it?—the sinews and bones were seen to be laid bare. We had surgical instruments; but in almost every case the doctors or staff-surgeons were at hand, and removed the diseased flesh as tenderly as they could. As for the toes, you could not recognize them as such. Far, far worse and more painful were these than the gun or sword wounds; and what must it have been where they had both? and then the poor frost-bitten fellows were so prostrate—no matter what care most of them got, they could not survive. One poor frost-bitten soldier told us that when, lying ill at Balaklava one night, he tried to stir his feet, he found them frozen to those of another soldier whose feet were lying against his.

A letter written by a Sister at the time will best continue the narrative at this point:—

We have just received some hundreds of poor creatures, worn out with sufferings beyond any you could imagine, in the Crimea, where the cold is so intense that a soldier described to me the Russians and the Allies in a sudden skirmish, and neither party able to

draw a trigger! So fancy what the poor soldiers must endure in the "trenches."

It is a comfort to think that these brave men had some care, all that we could procure for them. For at this time the food was very bad—goats' flesh, and something they called mutton, but black, blue, and green. Yet who could complain of anything after the sufferings I have described—borne, too, with such patience: not a murmur!

One day, after a batch had arrived from the Crimea, and I had gone my rounds through them, one of my orderlies told me that a man wanted to speak one word to me.

When I had a moment I went to him. "Tell me at once what you want; I have worse cases to see after"—he did not happen to be very bad. "All I want to know, Ma'am, is, are you one of our own Sisters of Mercy from Ireland?" "Yes," I said, "your very own." "God be praised for that!"

Another poor fellow said to me one day, "Do they give you anything good out here?" "Oh yes," I said; "why do you ask me?" "Because, Ma'am, you gave me a piece of chicken for my dinner, and I kept some of it for you"—he pulled it out from under his head and offered it to me. I declined the favor with thanks—I never could say enough of those kind-hearted soldiers and their consideration for us in the midst of their own sufferings.

The work of the hospital went on beautifully. The doctors themselves called it the "Model hospital of the East."

Some thousands passed through the hospital during the Sisters' time there.

During the stay of the Sisters at this favored spot they had a visit from the Purveyor-in-Chief, Mr. Scott-Robinson. He was a Scotsman, and before he paid us

a visit, he had taken a survey of the hospitals. The ladies, nearly all, were ill; the nurses sick, too, and gone home; and it appeared, as he stated, that it was the Sisters who were doing the work of the hospital. He called on Rev. Mother one day, and requested to see our quarters. She at once showed him everything, and he expressed surprise that we were so badly lodged. At once he went through the hospital, even to the doctors' quarters, and made us out much better accommodation. He placed entirely at our discretion all the stores, food, and clothing, and told Rev. Mother to act as if the hospital were her own. He said that we need not trouble ourselves any more about reports to the War Office, and that he would answer for us.

The weather was fearfully hot at this time, and insects of all kinds abounded—fleas, flies, bugs, ants, mosquitoes. As for rats, dogs, and donkeys, they were innumerable, and you may imagine how hard it was to get a sleep. Among other disquietudes, there was a gunpowder explosion, and the two hospitals were near being blown up. Moreover, we had several shocks of earthquakes. I was in one of the wards, and suddenly felt the ground move under me, as if I stood on the waves of the sea. After this was a sudden trembling, and the windows began to shake with a strange noise; pictures, a clock, and other things, fell in the ward. The poor patients were terrified. There was an open square in the center of the building, and all made a rush to get there; you may imagine what a scene it was—some hobbling, some tottering, and in their various degrees of undress. The shock lasted three minutes. We had another during the night—oh! such a strange and thrilling sensation, something like an electric shock.

Each Sister had charge of two wards, and there was just at this time a fresh outbreak of cholera. The

Sisters were up every night; and the cases, as in Scutari and Koulali, were nearly all fatal. Rev. Mother did not allow the Sisters to remain up at night, except in cases of cholera, without a written order from the doctor.

In passing to the wards at night we used to meet the rats in droves. They would not even move out of our way. They were there before us, and were determined to keep possession. As for our own hut, they evidently wanted to make it theirs, scraping under the boards, jumping up on the shelf where our little tin utensils were kept, rattling everything. One night dear Sister M. Paula found one licking her forehead—she had a real horror of them. Sleep was out of the question. Our third day in Balaklava was a very sad one for us. One of our dear band, Sister Winifred, got very ill during the night with cholera. She was a most angelic Sister, and we were all deeply grieved. She was attacked, about three o'clock in the morning, with the symptoms which were now so well known to us: every remedy was applied; our beloved Rev. Mother never left her; she was attended by Father Unsworth, from whom she received the last rites of our holy religion; and she calmly breathed her last on the evening of the same day. A hut was arranged in which to place the remains; and so alarming were the rats—and such huge animals were they—that we had to watch during the night so that they should not touch her. She, the first to go of our little band, had been full of life and energy the day before. We were all very sad, and we wondered who would be the next. Rev. Mother was anxious to have her buried near Father Wheble, the first Crimean Martyr. But Sir John Hall said that that place was likely to be desecrated, and that it was better to look elsewhere. And they did, indeed, find on the hills of Balaklava a spot of ground between two rocks, with just room for about two graves, and this was her



last resting-place. Father Woollett, Father Unsworth, and Father Malony preceded the coffin chanting the prayers, and we followed immediately after. Miss Nightingale was at the funeral, and even joined in the prayers. The soldiers, doctors, officers, and officials followed. When all was over we returned to our hut, very sad; but we had no further time to think. Patients were pouring in, and we should be out again to the cholera wards. Besides cholera, there were cases of fever, in fact of every disease. Others had been nearly killed by the blasting of rocks, and they came in fearfully disfigured.

At this date a friend in the camp sent Rev. Mother a copy of *The Illustrated London News*, with the following paragraph:

Miss Wise has been succeeded by sixteen Nuns (we were only fifteen), principally Irish ladies, who, having received instructions from Miss Nightingale, appear to be very attentive to their charge, and eminently deserving the name they bear—Sisters of Mercy. They are attired from head to foot in the deepest black; even their heads are carefully hooded. The only relief to this somber attire is the double string of beads hanging from their girdles. I was quite startled on my first introduction to one of these ladies. I had not even heard of their arrival, and having a patient in a very critical state in one of the hospital huts, I went down about midnight to pay him a visit. On opening the door, I beheld by the light of a wretched little lamp just such a phantom as Bulwer has drawn in *Lucretia*: darkness in every corner of the room, and a tall figure draped and hooded—darker even than the night—gliding from bed to bed. I am sorry to say that one of the Sisters, two days after their arrival, was seized with cholera and died.

During the month of January fever cases became very numerous, and, of course, night watching continuous. If a fever patient is not well nursed during the night,

no amount of care will bring back what he loses—some nourishment must be given every two hours, or more frequently, as the doctor may direct; we had bad cases of typhus and typhoid, and in these cases nursing is everything. The doctors were often surprised in the morning to find their patients so well over the night—no matter how clever a doctor may be, if he has not a good nurse, who will attend strictly to his directions, little can be done. The following report, sent by the Deputy-Purveyor to the War Office, dated December 24, 1855, came before me only lately, and I hope it will not be out of place here. He says:

The superiority of an ordered system is beautifully illustrated in the Sisters of Mercy. One mind appears to move all, and their intelligence, delicacy, and conscientiousness invest them with a halo of extreme confidence. The medical officer can safely consign his most critical cases to their hands. Stimulants or opiates ordered every five minutes will be faithfully administered though the five minutes' labor were repeated uninterruptedly for a week. The number of Sisters, without being large, is sufficient to secure for every patient needing it his share of attention: a calm resigned contentness sits on the features of all, and the soft cares of the woman and the lady breathe placidly throughout.

Early in 1856 rumors of peace reached us from all sides. But our Heavenly Father demanded another sacrifice from our devoted little band. Dear Sister Mary Elizabeth was called to a martyr's crown.

She was specially beloved for her extraordinary sweetness of disposition. The doctor, when called, pronounced her illness to be fever—she had caught typhus in her ward. Every loving care was bestowed on her by our dearest Mother, who scarcely ever left her bedside. Death seemed to have no sting for this saintly Religious—she

was continually renewing her vows and making her profession of faith. She had no wish to live or die, feeling she was in the arms of her Heavenly Father. "He will do for me what is best," she whispered, "and His will is all I desire." A little before her death she said: "Rev. Mother, I could never express to you how happy I feel. There is not one drawback." Rev. Mother said to her: "You know, dear Sister, all our wants. Will you not help us when you see God face to face?" "Oh, yes," she said, "I surely will." She thanked all the Sisters, embraced and took leave of them most affectionately, retaining her senses to the very last. She had no agony—the fever simply consumed her.

It was a wild, wild night. The storm and wind penetrated the chinks so as to extinguish the lights, and evoked many a prayer that the deathbed might not be left roofless. It was awful beyond description to kneel beside her during these hours of her passage and to hear the solemn prayers for the dead and dying mingled with the howling of the winds and the creaking of the frail wooden hut. Oh, never, never can any of us forget that night: the storm disturbed all but her, that happy being for whom earth's joys and sorrows were at an end, and whose summons home had not cost her one pang or one regret. Her happy death occurred on Saturday, the 23d of February.

The death of our dear Sister Mary Elizabeth was announced by the chaplain in the different divisions after Mass. It was also announced that the office would be at three, and the funeral immediately after. The 89th begged Father Unsworth to ask the captain to allow them off parade, that they might attend the funeral, which he willingly did. Detachments from every regiment joined them. The 89th requested the honor of being allowed to carry the coffin. Hundreds of soldiers formed a treble file on each side of the passage from the hospital to the

hut, where eight priests, the Sisters, and the soldiers chosen to bear the coffin had assembled. Every head was uncovered as the procession passed slowly down the hill to the chapel. It was a thrilling sight to see the multitude of various nations, ranks, and employments, amid holy silence unbroken save by the voice of tearful supplication. A contest arose later between the medical staff and the officers as to which should have the honor of putting a cross on her grave. We took no part, save to feel truly grateful for the kind feeling of which it was evidence.

The graves of our two dear Sisters were tended with loving kindness. A chaplain who visited the place long after the Sisters had left found these lonely graves on the brow of that rugged hill inclosed by a high iron railing set in cut stone—the whole being visible from the Black Sea beneath. They were decked with beautiful flowers and evergreens planted by the loving hands of their soldier friends, and marked with white marble crosses bearing their simple epitaph. On the arm of the cross of Sister Winifred's grave the priest found a paper, on which were written the following lines, composed, as he afterwards heard, by one of her orderlies:

Still green be the willow that grows on the mountain,  
And weeps o'er the grave of the Sister that's gone;

Of the other group—the mainly English group—of Sisters of Mercy who worked quite separately from the mainly Irish group in the Crimea, a brief history should be made.

When the war between Russia and the allied armies of England and France broke out in 1854, and our Government resolved to send to the Crimea a regularly organized staff of nurses, of which Miss Florence Nightingale was

placed at the head, Bishop Grant of Southwark obtained permission at once to place upon it a number of Sisters of Mercy. There was, however, at that time, but one Community of Nuns in the Diocese of Southwark within the limits of whose rules and vocation an undertaking of this sort seemed to lie. The members of this Community were few in number, and were already fully occupied by their labors of love amongst the poor and sick in their own neighborhood. Yet, when the Bishop arrived one evening at their Convent in Bermondsey, and explained to the Superior the sad state of affairs, and dwelt on the terrible sufferings of the wounded soldiers, and on their need of good nursing, sisterly sympathy, and religious consolation, she offered herself and four other Sisters for the perilous mission. Two days later the Bishop wrote to the Superior to say that the Government wished them to go immediately—in fact, they were to start the very next morning. They had, therefore, only a few hours in which to prepare for a long and dangerous journey, with the details of which they were quite unacquainted, only knowing that they were to start for Turkey at half-past seven in the morning, and that they went for the love of God.

“And who is to take care of you from this to Turkey?” asked one of their amazed well-wishers. To which the Sisters only replied that “they hoped their angel guardians would kindly do so.” Father Collingridge ran out and purchased for each Sister a railway rug and a small traveling bag, into which she stowed her clothes and books of devotion. Bishop Grant came the next morning, before the time of departure, to bid the travelers an affectionate good-by. He gave them a letter of introduction to Mr. Goldsmid, a friend in Paris, which was their first halting-place, and recommended them to put up for the night at the Hotel Meurice. On their arrival very late



in the capital, they found the hotel full, and in their perplexity carried their letter to the house of Mr. Goldsmid. They were told that he had retired for the night, and nothing would induce his man-servant to disturb him. Tired with their journey, alone and friendless in a great city, they had a sense of desolation that was very acute. The servant, compassionating their plight, conducted them to the Hotel Clarendon, where, fortunately, they could be taken in, and were comfortably entertained. Early the next morning Mr. Goldsmid arrived, bringing a telegram from Dr. Grant, desiring the Sisters to wait in Paris for a day or two, until further arrangements had been made. The Government having consented to ten Nuns being placed on the staff of nurses, the Bishop was most anxious to obtain five others to join those who had already started from Bermondsey. With this desire uppermost in his mind, he went to the Convent of the Faithful Virgin, at Norwood, to ask the orphans to pray for the additional volunteers. "Here is permission to send ten Nuns," he said to the Superior, "and I have only five." "My Lord," she replied, after a thoughtful pause, "we have no mission for the service of the sick, but you can dispose of us as you think fit." "God be praised!" said the Bishop, and it was decided that on Monday morning—it being then Saturday—a party of five should be ready to start. There was a generous rivalry among the Sisters as to whom should be chosen for the difficult service; and when the five were duly selected they went at once into the chapel, and kneeling before our dear Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, they offered their lives to Him. Before six on Monday morning the Bishop was at the station to bid them God-speed on their journey of love and self-sacrifice; but at the last parting his heart was too full to speak—he could only silently bless them.

The two detachments of Nuns met in Paris, and, joining Miss Nightingale, they sailed together from Marseilles, and, after a rough voyage, in which the vessel was nearly lost, reached Scutari. On landing they were escorted by soldiers to the huge barracks, capable of holding five thousand men, which had been handed over for the use of the English by the Sultan, along with the adjoining hospital, containing accommodation for two thousand beds. Nothing could be more desolate than the room allotted to the Sisters. Its only article of furniture was a decrepit chair; no fire could be obtained, and an icy wind blew through the broken windows. The luxury of a cup of tea, made with slightly warm water, and without milk or sugar, was obtained through the energy of a soldier; and this, along with a small slice of bread, constituted their first meal after landing on a foreign shore, worn out by the fatigue and sickness of the voyage.

The Battle of Inkerman was fought on the day following the arrival of the nurses, and henceforth the hospitals were crowded with the dying and the dead. How many lives were saved by the gentle ministrations of the Sisters those who were present at these awful scenes could, perhaps, form some idea; but how many souls gained eternally by the suggestions of faith and charity and contrition that fell from their lips on dying ears, will not be known until the day when those who bring many to righteousness shall shine with a sevenfold radiancy in the firmament of God. "No painting," says Miss Grace Ramsay, from whose beautiful memoir of Bishop Grant we have gathered the facts here related, "however graphic, could convey a true idea of what they, one and all, endured in their self-imposed warfare with death and sickness. In the stinging cold of an Eastern winter, with everything frozen hard, they were without a fire; their food was scanty, and so bad that it reduced them to a choice be-

tween sickness and hunger. During the first six weeks of their arrival a drink of pure water was a luxury not to be had!" The Sisters had no second habits, so that when they came home, as they often did, drenched with rain, they had to remain in bed until the wet clothes were dried at the kitchen fire.

The soldiers vied with each other in paying attention to the Sisters. "You would be surprised at the nice feeling the men show," one of them writes from the Scutari barracks; "they are so cautious in their manners, and never utter a bad word or an oath before us. If one chances to say what the others think too free in our presence, the whole ward cry out 'hush!'" Still, the position of the Sisters was a trying one—in the midst of three thousand soldiers; frequently coming into contact with foreigners, amongst others the Turks, who accosted them, respectfully enough, by the familiar name of "Johnny"; and, worse than all, deprived of all chance of solitude or of opportunities to join together in the performance of their habitual devotions. Very practical and very real were the everyday struggles of that life of charity and toil. Yet, on the other hand, as the writer before quoted observes, "a poem undoubtedly it was, mystic and wonderful, but not visible in its beauty to common eyes. It was a poem attuned to no earthly key, but to the voice of souls enamored of the Cross."

At one time the Bishop was greatly disturbed by rumors about an attempt to prevent the Sisters from speaking on matters of religion even to those of their own creed. He had written to them on their first setting out: "Do not introduce religion to any but Catholics. When you can, suggest an act to the dying, of contrition, faith, etc." They had gone out, as he constantly reminds them, as Nuns first, and then nurses; and now, when he hears of a plan which is to reduce them to be nurses only,

he writes to the Sisters to say that "it will be contrary to the express agreement with Government." People said the Nuns did not work well with Miss Nightingale, and an ultra-Protestant pamphlet appeared, pointing out the absurdity of "Catholic Nuns transferring their allegiance from the Pope of Rome to a Protestant lady." The tidings of these sayings and doings, when they reached Scutari, caused much merriment among the parties most nearly concerned. One of the Sisters playfully addressed Miss Nightingale as "Your Holiness," and the latter retorted by dubbing her "the Cardinal."

A year had now elapsed since the valiant little band set out towards the East. "What a dream," writes one in a letter home, "it all seems! One can scarcely believe that it will be a whole year next Wednesday since we left dear old Bermondsey. Yesterday there were great rejoicings for something—a victory gained, we know not where, for we live happily ignorant of all that goes on beyond the walls." In the following month, for the second time, the cholera broke out at Scutari. The angel of death was indeed abroad, and many of the occupants of the hospital wards fell beneath the shadow of his wings. Two of the Sisters had been seriously ill for some time, but had stuck to their posts through all; and now a devoted lay-sister fell a victim to the raging epidemic, and was buried by the soldiers with every mark of affection and respect. Miss Nightingale was at Balaklava at the time, and she wrote to the Rev. Mother at Scutari, asking her, if possible, to get additional Nuns from England. She concludes her letter thus: "I cannot express to you, dear Rev. Mother, the gratitude which I and the whole country feel to you for your goodness. You have been one of our chief mainstays, and without you I do not know what would have become of the work. With love to all my Sisters, believe me, dear Rev. Mother, ever yours

affectionately and gratefully, FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE." Consequently, three more Sisters found their way from Bermondsey to Scutari.

On Good Friday three of the Sisters accompanied Miss Nightingale to the "Front," and did service about five miles from Balaklava. "They had a tent to themselves," we are told, "open to the weather in many parts, and on awaking next morning they found themselves covered with snow, which had fallen heavily all night. They were consoled for those little discomforts by the arrival of a gentleman on horseback bearing them the princely present of some eggs, tied up in a handkerchief. The benefactor proved to be the Protestant chaplain of the detachment, who showed the Nuns many other acts of kindness and courtesy, which they strove to acknowledge by washing his neckties, a process performed under difficulties, the teapot filled with boiling water doing duty as a smoothing iron! Miss Nightingale, writing from the new encampment to the Sisters at Scutari, says: "I want my Cardinal very much up here. The Sisters are all quite well and cheerful, thank God for it! They have made their hut look quite tidy, and put up with the cold and inconveniences with the utmost self-abnegation. Everything, even the ink, freezes in our hut every night." "Sister A——," she writes again, "is such a very steady worker: she has seven sick huts. Sister C—— is very commanding and courageous, and not easily daunted." One of the Nuns had a dangerous attack of fever, through which Miss Nightingale insisted on nursing her herself. One night, while watching by the sick bed, she saw a huge rat upon the rafters right over the Sister's head; and taking an umbrella, she knocked it down and killed it without disturbing the patient.

And now at last, in April, 1856, a peace was concluded; but as the work among the wounded did not cease simul-



taneously with the cessation of the war, the Sisters still continued their stay in the East, with the exception of the Rev. Mother, whose shattered health and home duties rendered her return to England an imperative necessity. "Work away merrily!" were her parting words to those whom she left behind at Balaklava and Scutari. In a farewell letter addressed to her by Florence Nightingale, the latter says: "You know that I shall do everything I can for the Sisters whom you have left me. I will care for them as if they were my own children. But it will not be like you. I do not presume to express praise or gratitude to you, Rev. Mother, because it would look as though I thought you had done this work, not unto God, but unto me. You were far above me in fitness for the general superintendency in worldly talent of administration, and far more in the spiritual qualifications which God values in a Superior; my being placed over you was my misfortune, not my fault. What you have done for the work no one can ever say. I do not presume to give you any other tribute but my tears. But I should be glad that the Bishop of Southwark should know, and Dr. Manning, that you were valued here as you deserve, and that the gratitude of the army is yours."

The other Sisters remained more than two months longer on the scene of their long and loving labors; their return to England being commemorated by Bishop Grant in a Pastoral, in which he spoke of them as those who had "earned for themselves not, indeed, the perishable glory of earthly victory, but the promise of everlasting reward and of unfading crowns."

The Sisters had from the first refused all remuneration for their services; and when, after their return to England, Lord Panmure wrote to "express to the Sisterhood the sense entertained by Her Majesty's Government of the devotion displayed by them in attending the sick and

wounded soldiers in the British hospitals in the East," and to offer them a sum of money, the Nuns generously declined it, expressing at the same time a willingness, which the Government readily gratified, to distribute it among the poor and sick of their own district, preferring for themselves to be rewarded only by His grace and love, for whose sake alone they had undertaken a difficult and a noble work.

The following correspondence passed Jubilee Year, 1897, between the Queen and the author of this volume:

PALL MALL, LONDON, S. W.,  
*February 15th, 1897.*

MADAM,

The Queen having been pleased to bestow upon you the decoration of the Royal Red Cross, I have to inform you that in the case of such honors as this it is the custom of Her Majesty to personally bestow the decoration upon the recipient when such a course is convenient to all concerned; and I have, therefore, to request that you will be so good as to inform me whether it would be convenient to you to attend at Windsor some time within the next few weeks. Should any circumstances prevent your receiving the Royal Red Cross from the hands of Her Majesty, it could be transmitted by post to your present address.

I am, Madam, your obedient servant,

GEORGE M. FARQUHARSON.

Sister Mary Aloysius.

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ST. PATRICK'S, GORT, COUNTY GALWAY,  
*February 17th, 1897.*

SIR,

I received your letter of the 15th, intimating to me that Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen is pleased to bestow on me the Order of the Royal Cross, in recognition of the services of my Sisters in religion and my own

in caring for the wounded soldiers at the Crimea during the war. My words cannot express my gratitude for the great honor which Her Majesty is pleased to confer upon me. The favor is, if possible, enhanced by the permission to receive this public mark of favor at Her Majesty's own hands. The weight of seventy-six years and the infirmities of age will, I trust, dispense me from the journey to the Palace. I will, therefore, with sentiments of deepest gratitude, ask to be permitted to receive this mark of my Sovereign's favor in the less public and formal manner you have kindly indicated.

I am, Sir,  
Faithfully yours in Jesus Christ,  
SISTER M. ALOYSIUS.

# Mother Angela

## *And the Sisters of the Civil War*

By JAMES J. WALSH

WHEN the Civil War broke out in this country no one had the slightest idea that we were beginning one of the bitterest wars of all history in some of the battles of which more men were to be killed and wounded than in almost any other battles that had ever been fought. No one had any idea either that it would last so long and prove such a severe drain on the resources of the country. As brother fellow citizens in sister states we had lived together in this country for nearly a hundred years and it seemed almost preposterous to think that we could fight a war that would continue until one side was completely exhausted and could fight no more. Even President Lincoln asked for volunteers for only ninety days in the beginning and it is said that President Jefferson Davis, who from his experience in the Cabinet and in the War Department particularly was felt to be in touch with the spirit of the country more than anyone else, is said to have declared, "Let us lick the Yankees twice and the war will be over in three months." Just the same sort of mistake was made with regard to the possible continuance of the Civil War as with regard to the recent great war in Europe which so many people felt could not possibly last more than a few weeks or a few months at the outside and yet it lasted for four bitter years and four months.

Probably the most noteworthy unpreparedness for the war in 1861 was the almost total lack of organization of the military medical department in such a way as would

enable it to care for the immense numbers of wounded and ailing soldiers who were thrown on its hands in the course of a few months. This is not surprising once the hospital conditions of that time are recalled. Even as late as 1870 we had less than a hundred and fifty hospitals in this country for some forty millions of people, while at the present time for less than three times as many people we have more than fifty times as many hospitals (about 7,000) and while fifty years ago there were only 35,000 beds in hospitals, we now have some 700,000 beds. There has come an immense development of hospitals during the past generation quite undreamt of in the '60's of the nineteenth century.

The hospitals were not only few as the Civil War began but their organization was very defective. The trained nurse was not introduced into this country until 1872 and even then as an institution the spread of the trained nurse system was very slow. Hospitals were as a rule in a disgraceful state of degradation. They were dirty and ill ventilated, they had narrow corridors and small windows, they reeked with infection, some form of infectious disease was practically always in the wards, and patients who came in suffering from one disease, or a wound, caught another disease or some virulent infection while they were in the hospital. The death rate was fearfully high, sometimes actually more than fifty percent of the patients that entered hospitals dying in them, and in those days before Lister's work created a new era of surgery, hospital surgery was extremely discouraging.

No wonder that patients had a deep prejudice against hospitals and would not go to them unless there was absolutely nowhere else for them to go. It was looked upon as about as serious a disgrace to have to go to a hospital as to have to go to the poorhouse. The only nurses that could be obtained for the hospitals were work-



ing women who did the menial work of the house besides caring for the patients. Even they were not of the better class of working women. Many a doctor in England and America at that time declared that he would be perfectly satisfied if his hospital nurses would stay sober. They did not stay sober as a rule. Unfortunately just at that period a great many of the severer diseases of mankind were being treated with whisky. All of the continued fevers as well as tuberculosis and the severer surgical infections and puerperal fever were thought to be influenced favorably by frequent doses of whisky. This made the liquor constantly available in the wards and the nurses were usually such characters as would take it every now and then and it is easy to understand the sorry hospital conditions that developed as a result of its presence.

It is easy to understand then how little of anything like adequate preparation was possible, even if it had been attempted, for the care of the sick and the wounded among the soldiers in the early days of the Civil War. To a very great extent the story of the awful conditions of the early days of the Crimean War was repeated only that our armies were nearer home and the plight of our soldiers in need of hospital care was sooner known and the great heart of the country went out to them. Our womenfolk, the mothers and sisters and cousins and aunts, of the soldiers, endeavored to do all that they could but untrained as they were and without proper organization, it is easy to understand how they were swamped by the tasks that they tried to perform. The number of cases on their hands was enormous. It does not seem too much to say according to the available records in our possession that within six months after the beginning of the war something over thirty percent of all the troops in camp were prostrated as a result of the unaccustomed hardships to which they were exposed. This was quite apart from

the wounded who fortunately before the organization of the armies were not so frequent as might have been expected. Neither munitions nor arms were available to make the war as destructive as it might have been at that time and as it became a little later.

The problem of caring for these ailing soldiers was an immense one, that could be only gradually arranged for. The contagious diseases alone constituted a very grave responsibility for the army medical department. Older folk, that is those beyond middle age in our generation, still have poignant memories of what took place in this regard during the Spanish-American War only a little more than twenty-five years ago, though that was thirty-five years after the Civil War and modern medicine had made very great advances. Typhoid fever carried off many more of our young soldiers than the bullets of the enemy. This was not surprising, however, because typhoid fever has always been the great bane of armies and in every war until the Great War has always proved more fatal than all the perils of the battlefield. It is easy to understand what the typhoid fever problem alone meant during the Civil War. Of course the disease masqueraded under a good many different names and in some parts was called bilious fever or bilious remittent fever or just fever, for its differentiation from other affections was not yet entirely clear. Besides there was the malaria problem which needed solution so sadly. The disease carried off many of the healthiest and strongest of the Northern soldiers who had to camp and fight in the unaccustomed heat of the Southland that they were trying to penetrate.

Within six months of the beginning of the Civil War a whole series of contagious diseases besides typhoid fever, smallpox, measles and even the so-called milder infections brought down thousands. The diarrheas and lung fevers

as they called them, or as we would say pneumonia and tuberculosis, added their quota. The outlook was indeed disturbing. A trained newspaper man of the time tells the story of the most promising factor that made itself felt in the midst of this welter and confusion and suffering that was so discouraging. He said:

"In the sanitary department as in every other branch of the military service there was immense enthusiasm but an almost total lack of experience and efficient organization. All classes of the country did everything possible and gave generously of everything in their power at this emergency, but the Catholic Sisterhoods especially accomplished wonderful work. The beautiful order enforced by their gentle discipline, their utter self-denial, their patience, tact, and consummate skill, were of course the effect of Christian charity on the naturally sympathetic temperaments of good and intelligent women. The first hospital structures available were mostly empty barns, or warehouses, or rough barrack-sheds; yet these in the Sisters' hands were so admirably managed as finally to become a model for the study of European military sanitation. With the first shot of the war Mother Angela went to the field and took many of her Sisters with her, remaining to the very end. When at last they went back to Notre Dame the commanding general of one of the districts where they had carried on their beneficent work among the sick and wounded sent them in acknowledgment some captured cannon, which are still to be seen on the lawn of St. Mary's, and which it was Mother Angela's hope to have some day cast into a statue of Our Lady of Peace.

"Just as soon as the Civil War broke out Mother Angela realized the great need there would be for skilled help in the care of the sick and wounded soldiers. At the moment she was the directress at St. Mary's Academy,

Notre Dame, Indiana, but leaving St. Mary's in charge of competent aid, she organized a large corps of Sisters and hurried to the front where their presence was so much needed. In every army and every battlefield in the West she and her Sisters were found. She established field hospitals as well as several permanent hospitals. Her influence at Washington was all powerful both because of her family connections and because of the recognition of the wonderful work for the sick and wounded soldiers. Sometimes even where generals failed to secure needed aid, Mother Angela would make flying trips to Washington and the aid was forthcoming. In those dark years of the war she lived a half score years of her life and crowded more than that much work into the four years. Its close left her much enervated; it aged her and she never fully recovered her bodily strength."

During the early days of the war and the hospital service, we all know how inadequate were the supplies for the sick and wounded; how meager the equipments for the hospital nurses. A poor little circular stovepipe served the indefatigable Mother Angela on which to prepare with her own skillful hands the early cup of gruel for her patients, rising at four, or if need were, at three in the morning to answer the first call of the sufferers; and the character of the stores provided was such as few could realize one year later. At this time the Commissary Board sent a visitor to the camp and hospital where Mother Angela and her Sisters were stationed. During all these months nothing could exceed the courtesy of the officers, who always shared any choice provisions which came to them with the Sisters, as they supposed, while the Sisters so scrupulously passed on to their patients everything which could tempt the sick appetite, sharing, in fact, only the rations served regularly to the hospital wards. When the Commissary visitor arrived he was duly escorted to

the hospital, which excited his warmest approbation for its order, neatness, comfort of every sort; but as he was bowing himself out in the most complimentary manner from the presence of Mother Angela and her band of Sisters, she said to him: "But, Mr. —, you must allow us to show you some hospitality. Pardon our lack of silver and porcelain, but take a cup of hospital tea!" "Thank you, thank you, Mother Angela, but I have taken dinner already with the officers, and need nothing." "Allow me to insist!" and before another excuse could be urged, a Sister appeared with a snow-white napkin and the tin cup and spoon of the hospital and—the anything than fragrant beverage of hospital tea. "Sugar, Sister," said the sweetly ringing voice of the gentlewoman, Mother Angela, and before our Commissary visitor could wave off this fresh specimen of hospital luxury, Mother Angela had dumped into the tin cup what resembled the scrapings of the molasses barrel more than sugar. Our Commissary visitor was a gentleman from the toe of his boot to the crown of his head, and he drank the cup of tea, well stirred, to its dregs without a grimace, bowing as he handed the empty cup to the Sister, while Mother Angela rubbed her little hands with unmistakable glee and the full merriment of laughing eyes, as she said: "I knew, Mr. —, you would wish to taste of our hospital tea!" And the Commissary visitor vowed in his heart as he turned from the hospital door that the next train, on his arrival home, should take, as he said in his letter to Mother Angela, such stores to her own and to every hospital under his charge as a Christian man could accept without shame from the hand of any hospital nurse in the land.

One of the incidents of Mother Angela's nursing experience as related by Eliza Allen Starr will serve to show something of what she had to stand:

Among the disabled Confederates brought to the Union



Hospital at Cairo, was an officer of high rank, who had been wounded in the lung, and his arm nearly torn from his body. Lashed to his bed of suffering to secure his wounds from any loosening of bandages, he seemed like a Titan in bonds; only full of gratitude for the care bestowed by surgeons and nurses. One day, when the Sister in charge was in attendance upon the officer, a surgeon stepped in hurriedly, saying, in a low voice: "Sister, you must leave the room instantly!" And as she showed reluctance to leaving her patient, who needed her attention, he repeated: "Instantly, you must not delay!" She obeyed, but went directly to Mother Angela, whose quick step, noiseless as it was, brought her, almost in the same breath, to the officer's room confronting the astonished surgeon with the question: "Why have you dismissed my Sister from the bedside of her patient?"

"Danger, immediate danger."

"Then she should most certainly have remained at her post."

"You do not understand me. There is an uprising of the troops who have just heard of this officer's arrival, and although they are under a mistake, no one can convince them that he did not *knowingly* fire upon the scalded Union soldiers jumping from the exploded ironclad—into the Mississippi, and they are resolved to shoot him in his bed."

As he said this, a hoarse yell broke on the ears of the surgeon and of the religious, on the ears, too, of the patient, pinioned to his cot.

"You must leave the room, Mother Angela! They are here already, and too frenzied to listen to reason, or even to commanders."

"And you cannot protect your wounded prisoners?"

"Nor can we protect, you, even, Mother Angela, unless you leave this room instantly!"

One look at the wounded officer gave her the face of a man who could have met death in battle bravely, now to die like a villain. His wounded lung was strained to gashing, his nostrils dilated, his eyes starting from their sockets, the beads of perspiration rolling from his face—a veritable Prometheus bound to his hospital cot! Without a word in reply to the surgeon, Mother Angela stepped to the window, which was wide open, closed it and stood directly before it. By this time the hoarse shouts of the multitude, “Shoot the coward, like a dog as he is!” with curses loud and deep, filled the air. No sooner, however, did the soldiers see the slight figure of Mother Angela, her white cap and collar standing out from the black veil and habit, than they cried out: “Go away, Sister, go away! let us shoot him like a dog!” But the slender figure remained immovable. Again rose cries and shouts: “Go away, Sister. Leave him, he deserves to die like a dog!” But not a finger of that little woman was raised, even in expostulation, until it was plain to them that they must shoot the Sister before they could harm her charge.

All at once came a lull, then a silence; then as the far rear urged forward the surging ranks, there was a turning at the front as if to pass some word along the lines; when, one by one, then by tens and fifties and hundreds, the multitude moved silently away from the hospital precincts, and the very hush of death hung over the space where half an hour before clamored the infuriated soldiers of a noble Republic. Only when the keen eyes of Mother Angela had seen the last man in his barrack, did she raise the window sash and turn to her patient. One look of gratitude, of unspeakable confidence, told her all that was in his heart; but she did not leave him, even to the care of a Sister, until his safety was guaranteed from headquarters.

The war over, Mother Angela and her Sisters returned to St. Mary's to take up the old obedience wherever it had been; the only thing, even to-day; indicating their part in the national crisis, being the spiked cannon which a few months after were sent to Mother Angela and her community as a recognition of their services by the commander in whose division they had labored. The spiked cannon still lie on the green before St. Mary's Academy, one of Mother Angela's unfulfilled visions; for she always said; "Wait! one day you will see them transformed into a statue of Our Lady of Peace."

This incident of itself is enough to make it very clear what a great-souled woman Mother Angela was. She was utterly thoughtless of self and she deserves a place of honor among these Splendid Sisters of all times. The example that she set was very soon followed by other Sisterhoods throughout the country until literally many hundreds of Sisters were devoting themselves to the care of the sick and wounded soldiers and bringing consolation to patients and help for physicians into conditions that before their coming had been almost literally impossible. A brief sketch of her career serves to show much more there was in life for her than this noble response to the great call of duty when her country was in danger, and her fellow citizens were in suffering. For many women war arouses all that is best in their nature and gives them a stimulus to thoughtfulness for others that enables them to accomplish great good. For how many women did not this last Great War effect this. Her war experience, however, was only an incident in the life of Mother Angela and all of her life was devoted in just the same way as during the war time to thoughtfulness and accomplishment that was to mean much not only by example but by the foundations which it laid for enduring good work.

Eliza Maria Gillespie, to be known in after life as Mother Mary of St. Angela, was the eldest daughter of John T. and Mary Myers Gillespie born Feb. 21, 1824, in Brownsville, Pa. The family had been known for its devotion to its religion and indeed the original Gaelic form of their name is MacGiola Eispuic, which means "son of the Bishop's follower" doubtless in reference to the fact that the first of the name was close to the Churchmen. She was related rather closely to the Ewings, the Sher-mans and the Blaines, members of whose families have occupied the most prominent positions in the country. Her godfather, the elder Thomas Ewing, was one of the most eminent Whig statesmen in this country and Secretary of State under President William Henry Harrison. James G. Blaine, her first cousin, was a member of Congress for almost a generation, United States Senator, Secretary of State under President Garfield, and after having been among the most prominent in Republican presidential conventions for years was the Republican candidate for President in 1884. General William Tecumseh Sherman was another relative who like her was raised and educated by the elder Thomas Ewing. His military record in this country is only second to that of General Grant. Her brother-in-law, Philip B. Ewing, was one of the most eminent jurists in Ohio. "Young Tom" Ewing was a well-known general in the Union army and one of the most prominent politicians in Ohio. His sister was the wife of General William T. Sherman. Mother Angela's only brother, Reverend Neal H. Gillespie, was the first graduate of Notre Dame University. Afterwards he became its vice president, was president of St. Mary's College in Chicago, was sent on an important religious mission to France. On his return he was for several years editor of the *Ave Maria*, the Catholic magazine with the largest circulation in America.

The house in which Mother Angela was born was a large double structure and in the other half of it lived the parents of James Gillespie Blaine, who was born there six years later. Mr. Blaine's mother and Mother Angela's father were brother and sister and the two children were raised together until the one was twelve and the other six years old and the attachment formed in childhood was of the most affectionate character and lasted through life. She had the same personal magnetism that was so notable in her distinguished relative Mr. Blaine and like him she retained it through life. As a result she was able to influence others very deeply and enabled them to accomplish purposes that they themselves could scarcely believe themselves capable of.

Miss Gillespie was sent to the Convent of the Visitation at Georgetown, D. C., which is now in the Capital, to be educated. Her godfather and near relative, Mr. Ewing, was at that time almost as prominent a figure in the Whig party as Henry Clay and most of his time was passed in Washington. About the time that Miss Gillespie graduated, he was Secretary of State under President Harrison and it is easy to understand what an opportunity, socially speaking, this provided for his daughter and Miss Gillespie who were schoolmates and apart from school life spent most of their time together. Miss Gillespie's beauty, accomplishments, wit and learning made her a center of attraction in Washington society. It was thought that she would surely make a brilliant marriage and there was no question but that she could have done so had she been so inclined. Under the circumstances it is easy to understand that Washington society was very much surprised when it heard that this brilliant and beautiful young woman had given up all her worldly prospects in order to devote herself to the care and education of others. It



created quite a sensation. Toward the end of her life when she could look back on years of service, many of them hard because of the work she had to do during the Civil War, others surrounded with difficulties because her planning for others often outran her resources and she had to struggle to make both ends meet, she expressed her supreme satisfaction over the choice that she had made and the fact that she had tried to spend her life for the benefit of others rather than for any selfish purposes. She had been an inspiration in life and a support in time of trial for a great many. Few of those who came in contact with her went away without being bettered.

It is no wonder that under her administration St. Mary's Academy at Notre Dame prospered beyond all precedent in the history of feminine education, in this country up to that time but her ambition in the good cause only led her as a result of this to establish others in different parts of the country. Before her death, each year the academies founded by her were sending out literally hundreds of young ladies with well-developed minds, highly cultivated tastes and trained wills. They were educated not only in the arts and literature but also in domestic economy, for Mother Angela realized fifty years ago the need for training in this subject and recognized that the young women of the Sisters' academies must be fitted as far as possible for their life work as the heads of households and their everyday duties as wives and mothers.

Some idea of the amount of work that she accomplished for the higher education of women as well as for the organization of care for the ailing poor and those in suffering, can be obtained from the names of the institutions of various kinds outside of St. Mary's which were founded directly or indirectly through Mother Angela's inspira-

tion and the influence which she exerted on the Sisters of her community and the bishops and priests of the country during the precious years after the war was over.

Her war experience had developed her powers of initiative and had given her a prestige which enabled her to accomplish what often seemed to be almost the impossible. She was absolutely untiring in her work and had an endless ambition to accomplish all the good that was possible quite as if she feared that there might not be long years ahead of her in which to do all that she hoped to be able to accomplish.

Here is the list of her foundations: Assumption School, South Bend; Holy Cross Academy, Baltimore, Md.; St. Ambrose's Academy, Michigan City, Ind.; St. Angela's Academy, Morris, Ill.; St. Joseph's Male Orphan Asylum, Washington, D. C.; St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum, Rensselaer, Ind.; Holy Angels' Academy, Logansport, Ind.; St. Joseph's Academy, South Bend, Ind.; St. Rose's Academy, Laporte, Ind.; Sacred Heart Academy, Allen County, Ind.; St. Michael's School, Plymouth, Ind.; St. Charles' School, Crawfordsville, Ind.; St. Cecilia's Academy, Washington, D. C.; St. Mary's Academy, Alexandria, Va.; Holy Cross Academy, Washington, D. C.; St. Catherine's Normal Institute, Baltimore, Md.; Dolan Aid Asylum, Baltimore, Md.; St. Mary's Academy, Austin, Texas; St. Mary's Infirmary, Cairo, Ill.; St. Mary's Academy, Salt Lake City, Utah; St. Bernard's School, Watertown, Wis.; Sacred Heart Academy, Lancaster, Penn.; Sacred Heart Academy, Ogden, Utah; Holy Cross Hospital, Salt Lake City, Utah; St. Mary's School, Union City, Ind.; St. Mary's School, Anderson, Ind.; St. Mary's School, Marshall, Texas; St. John's School, Goshen, Ind.; St. Vincent's School, Elkhart, Ind.; St. Mary's School, Park City, Utah; St.

Joseph's Hospital, South Bend, Ind.; St. Edward's Academy, Deadwood, Dakota; United States Marine Hospital, Cairo, Ill.; Hawk's Hospital, Mt. Carmel, Columbus, Ohio; St. Mary's Academy of the Holy Rosary, Woodland, California.

# The Nuns of the Battlefield

By AMBROSE KENNEDY

THE Nuns of the Battlefield are the immortal heroines of the Civil War in America, and the passage of this resolution will be a wholesome and lasting expression of a people's gratitude, belated though it is, for their deeds of self-sacrifice and devotion. Volumes might be written extolling the virtues of these sisters, but no words can tell the story of their sacrifice so tersely or half so well as the words contained in the "Recollections of Abraham Lincoln" at whose call they volunteered in the service:

Of all the forms of charity and benevolence seen in the crowded wards of the hospitals, those of some Catholic Sisters were among the most efficient. I never knew whence they came or what was the name of their order. More lovely than anything I have ever seen in art, so long devoted to illustrations of love, mercy, and charity, are the pictures that remain of those modest Sisters going on their errands of mercy among the suffering and the dying. Gentle and womanly, yet with the courage of soldiers leading a forlorn hope, to sustain them in contact with such horrors. As they went from cot to cot, distributing the medicines prescribed, or administering the cooling, strengthening draughts as directed, they were veritable angels of mercy. Their words were suited to every sufferer. One they incited and encouraged, another they calmed and soothed. With every soldier they conversed about his home, his wife, his children, all the loved ones

he was soon to see again if he was obedient and patient. How many times have I seen them exorcise pain by their presence or their words! How often has the hot forehead of the soldier grown cool as one of these Sisters bathed it! How often has he been refreshed, encouraged, and assisted along the road to convalescence, when he would otherwise have fallen by the way, by the home memories with which these unpaid nurses filled his heart!

Throughout the hundreds of volumes constituting the hospital and the military records of the Civil War and the original records prepared during the war under the supervision of Miss Dorothea Dix some official information is obtainable concerning the ministrations of the Sisters, but the lack of comprehensive indexes to these records makes an exhaustive search impossible. Careful and painstaking examination, however, among other sources and personal and direct communication with the various institutions from which the Sisters went out to administer to the needs of the soldiers disclose a large mass of data, illuminating and authentic, which shows that seven different orders of Sisters, namely, Sisters of Mercy, Sisters of the Holy Cross, Sisters of St. Joseph, Sister of Charity of Nazareth, Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Sisters of the Mother Seton Order of Charity, and the Ursuline Nuns, furnished their respective quotas to labor in the humane and merciful work. And they did service in the following States: Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, New York, Pennsylvania, Mississippi, Tennessee, Virginia, Missouri, Maryland, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas, and also in the District of Columbia. Not only did they labor in the hospitals but they went from one battlefield to another, in ambulances, in old wagons, in every form of vehicle available, for they cared not for flourish or ostentation, but only for the chance to come as quickly as possible to the assistance of suffering humanity.



Prominent among the Sisters who served in the Civil War were the various communities of the Sisters of Mercy, a congregation founded September 24, 1827, by Miss Catherine Elizabeth McAuley, of Dublin, Ireland, and later, on December 22, 1843, established in the United States at Pittsburgh, Pa., by seven Sisters who came here from Carlow, Ireland, with Mother M. Frances Warde as Superior.

Numerous Sisters of Mercy from New York, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago, Charleston, Savannah, Vicksburg, and New Orleans served during the entire course of the war, laboring on both sides of the line; but their principal scenes of action were Southern battlefields.

On the 15th of July, 1862, supported by the counsel of Archbishop Hughes, of New York, seven members of this order embarked on the Government boat *Catawba*, bound for Beaufort, N. C., under the care of Maj. Gen. Foster. On arriving at their destination they entered the Hammond General Hospital and immediately began the process of house cleaning so sorely needed to dispel the gloom that was everywhere apparent. So many hardships confronted them that two of their number died and others were stricken by illness. But they labored and persevered and by diligent and patient application overcame the difficulties in their pathway. Not only did they nurse the patients, but they spoke the words of consolation that comforted and cheered them and averted the mental anxieties which soldiers are wont to feel for their families at home.

After remaining a short time at Beaufort a detachment of these Sisters were brought by Gen. Foster to take charge of a hospital at Newbern where special cases needed attention. At Newbern these Sisters were given possession of the headquarters of Gen. Burnside, which, during the War of the Revolution, had been occupied by Gen. Washington. These headquarters communicated with

other houses which were used as hospitals and in these institutions the Sisters nursed the wounded, maimed, and sick soldiers that were brought in from day to day. Among the patients there was one young fellow who was the brother of the late Bishop Phillips Brooks.

Newbern, Vicksburg, Mississippi Springs, Oxford, Jackson, and Shelby Springs bear eloquent testimony to the silent devotion and quiet heroism of these women.

Memorable and heroic were the sacrifices they made and many a tribute has been paid them by soldiers of the Union and Confederate sides. Some years after the war a number of Sisters of Mercy, traveling through the South, met Jefferson Davis, expresident of the late Confederacy, who noticed their garb as they boarded a train upon which he also was a passenger. He went from his place to the section of the car in which the Sisters were seated and addressing them said :

“Will you allow me, ladies, to speak a moment with you? I am proud to see you once more. I can never forget your kindness to the sick and wounded in our darkest days, and I know not how to testify my gratitude and respect for every member of your noble order.”

It would be an unpardonable oversight not to mention in passing that woman of superior attainments, the Irish-born Mother Superior, Augustine McKenna, who did admirable service throughout the war. It was this same Irish Sister of Mercy with Mother M. Theresa Maher of Cincinnati, and their devoted companions who, at the call of the mayor of Cincinnati, personally attended to the needs of the Ohio regiments in February, 1862, when an epidemic of smallpox swept over them. They personally dressed the infectious and contagious eruptions of these patients when all others had gone away and abandoned them. The sick and wounded soldiers in the blue and the

gray who shared in the ministrations of the Sisters of Mercy were supplied with everything that could be obtained for their comfort. Sisters of Mercy worked zealously at St. Louis in the hospital on the fair grounds in that city, where patients numbering from one to two thousand were the objects of their tender solicitude. At McDowell College also they rendered notable service.

The deep interest manifested by high officials of the Government in the humane and sympathetic labors of the Sisters can be gathered here and there among the records of the war. It is needless to multiply examples of this official appreciation. One instance, however, may be cited here in the following letter written by President Lincoln himself when supplies had been refused the Sisters of Mercy:

*To all whom it may concern:*

On application of the Sisters of Mercy of Chicago, of the military hospital in Washington, furnish such provisions as they desire to purchase and charge the same to the War Department.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Shortly after the outbreak of the war the Sisters of Mercy of Baltimore tendered their services to the governor of Maryland as nurses for the sick and wounded soldiers. The offer was quickly accepted and the Sisters were assigned to duty in a hospital in the city of Washington known as the "Infirmary," a structure which belonged to Senator Stephen A. Douglas, of Illinois. A fire reduced this building to ruins and necessitated the removal of the Sisters and their patients to an old school building, where they remained until other quarters were made ready to receive them. Without much delay the Douglas Hospital on I Street was fitted up by Government authorities, who transformed into a hospital three large senatorial resi-

dences, the most pretentious of these being the residence of Senator Douglas, whose name was given to the institution. To these buildings were added four extensive and commodious barracks. There, among the sick and wounded, these Sisters labored unceasingly until the termination of the war. Sister M. Collette O'Connor, Superior in charge of the Douglas Hospital, died there on July 16, 1864, and her remains were escorted to Baltimore and buried with the military honors of a major.

On the 21st day of May, 1910, Sister M. Anastasia Quinn, one of the Nuns of this order who labored at the Douglas Hospital, was still living at Mount St. Agnes College in Baltimore. On that same date a committee, consisting of Past Commander in Chief John R. King, Past Department Commander Maj. Frederick C. Tarr, and William J. Klugg, past commander of Wilson Post, of the Grand Army of the Republic, visited that institution for the purpose of presenting her a bronze pin in recognition of her services during the war. In presenting the pin Gen. King said:

"Sister Anastasia, at the Thirty-eighth National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, held at San Francisco, an order was passed to have prepared a suitable medal to be presented to the Army nurses of the Civil War as a token of our appreciation of their self-sacrificing work and our undying gratitude for their priceless services, a service rendered under most trying circumstances, when these noble women abandoned all thought of self, and labored to aid the sick and wounded, to soothe the last hours of many a dying comrade. These badges, under the resolution, were to be presented to the members of the Army Nurses' Association. When I became Commander-in-Chief it came to my knowledge that there were Catholic Sisters who were Army nurses, but not members of that association.

"I thought they were also entitled to our consideration,

so at the national encampment at Denver, Colo., provision was made to similarly honor those good Sisters. As you, my dear Sister, were one of those noble women sent of God as ministering angels to alleviate the sufferings of the Union soldier and nurse him back to health, to soothe the dying hero and make smooth his pathway to the grave, we are here as representatives of the Grand Army of the Republic to present you this small token of our gratitude for services you rendered. It is but a small bit of bronze, of no intrinsic value, but, O, my dear Sister how much it represents! The tears, the prayers, the gratitude that go with it from every survivor of that dreadful war.

"We feel that you were one of us; that your sacrifices were as great as ours, for it was not always that the greatest praise was due to the man who stood on the firing line, for there were heroines with ever watchful eye and loving sympathy, waiting in the rear to minister to him who might fall in the shock of battle.

"Take this, my dear Sister, and wear it, and as you wear it, a flood of memories will come back to you of the many scenes through which you passed in those unhappy days of 'grim-visaged war.' With you, as with us, the shadows are lengthening, and we pray that He who 'covered our heads in the day of battle' will be with you through the remaining years of your journey and at the last give you abundant entrance into those everlasting joys above, where there will be no more wars or rumors of war."

The Stanton, another hospital in Washington, named after the distinguished Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton, was controlled during the entire war by the Sisters of Mercy of Pittsburgh, who came there in response to an application made by the Government authorities in Washington. Sisters of this same Pittsburgh community also served in the Western Pennsylvania Hospital, at Pittsburgh. At the Stanton Hospital hundreds of soldiers were attended to, among them being a large number of Confederate troops who were wounded at the second battle of Fredericksburg December 13, 1862.



"It was a beautiful sight," said one of the Sisters, "to see how tenderly the convalescent Union soldiers helped to nurse back the health of those whom they had so fiercely fought a short time before."

During the stay of these Sisters at the Stanton Hospital they were honored by a visit from President Lincoln, who spent some time with them, speaking warm words of praise and commendation and complimenting them on the order and cleanliness of the place and the comfort and relief they had given the wounded.

The Sisters of Mercy of Cincinnati were enrolled among the communities who applied themselves with generous and painstaking zeal to the spiritual and corporal works of mercy during the war. Their House of Mercy, on Third Street in that city, was converted during the war period into an auxiliary hospital for the treatment of sick and wounded soldiers. Numbers of the soldiers who were cared for in that institution were prisoners from the Southern Army. But service far more important and extensive was given by members of this same community after the battle of Pittsburg Landing, Tenn. Responding to a call of the mayor of Cincinnati, several Sisters of Mercy went on board a vessel known as the *Superior* and sailed down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to the scenes of suffering at Shiloh. The vessel was used as an emergency hospital to receive the stricken soldiers who were carried in for medical attention. Among the afflicted patients were a number of smallpox cases. In administering to the comforts of these unfortunates the Sisters exemplified a wonderful spirit of fortitude and charity. They remained at their post of duty until all the soldiers had been properly cared for in that awful hour of misery and affliction.

The Sisters of Mercy of Chicago nursed the sick and wounded at Jefferson City, Mo., and also on the floating

hospital known as the *Empress*. About this same period these Sisters tried to reach Lexington to administer to the troops stationed there under command of Col. Mulligan, of the Chicago Irish Brigade, to whom and to whose officers and soldiers a resolution of thanks for gallantry in defending Lexington was passed on December 20, 1861, in the House of Representatives in Washington. They embarked on a vessel called the *Sioux City*, which was conducting a detachment of troops to Lexington. While proceeding on its voyage this boat was nearly riddled with bullets fired by the infantry on the right and the cavalry on the left bank of the river. In justice to the Southern soldiers, however, it must be said that they disclaimed all knowledge that there were women on board the vessel; above all, the Sisters of Mercy. When these sisters had finished their labors at Jefferson City in April, 1862, they prepared to return to Chicago, but on reaching St. Louis their plans were changed, for there they were requested to take charge of the hospital work on the steamboat *Empress*, above referred to, which was then bound for Shiloh, to transfer the sick and wounded from that scene of strife to where they would receive the care and attention they needed. They spent five weeks in this service carrying the sick and wounded to Keokuk, St. Louis, Louisville, and other landing points along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. While these Sisters were occupied with the work at Jefferson City Hospital Gen. Fremont paid them a visit. Being apprised that the sick and dying soldiers were suffering for want of actual necessities of life, he soon saw that relief was given.

Most conspicuous among the Sisters of Mercy then in the service of the country was Mother M. Frances (Mary Mulholland), born at Armagh, Ireland. This Sister did wonderfully effective work during the war, bringing comfort to many a soldier in the hour of agony and distress.

It was she who personally escorted a band of Nuns to Lexington at the request of Col. Mulligan, of the Chicago Irish Brigade, whose life was sacrificed in the cause of the Union.

On the 10th day of July, 1863, as the Federals unmasked their guns and opened fire on Morris Island, the memorable siege of Charleston, S. C., began. It lasted until the formal surrender on February 18, 1865, the city being practically all the while under fire. In the course of this protracted siege the city was reduced to a ruinous condition by the destructive force of shot and shell. Distress and sorrow were widespread. In describing the gloomy picture Gen. Sherman said:

“Anyone who is not satisfied with the war should go and see Charleston, and he will pray louder and deeper than ever that the country may in the long future be spared any more war.”

In the midst of the desolation that prevailed in every quarter of this locality the Charleston community of the Sisters of Mercy rendered most timely and valuable services among both inhabitants and soldiers.

A few years before the outbreak of the war some of the Sisters of Mercy had been transferred from convents farther north to newly established foundations in Southern States. At Vicksburg, Miss., in the spring of 1861, a convent of the Sisters of Mercy was founded just one year before hostilities began. Some time after the call to arms this convent was turned into a hospital with the Sisters remaining as nurses; but the structure was not large enough to comfortably accommodate any considerable number of patients. Later, the Confederate government established a hospital at Mississippi Springs, where members of this same community presided amidst the most harassing difficulties, taking care of about 800 sick

and wounded patients. From Mississippi Springs they went to Jackson to take charge of a few hundred wounded men in the deaf and dumb institute, but, finding that these men were receiving proper medical assistance, they proceeded to Oxford where their services were greatly needed in caring for a large number of men who lay sick and wounded in the buildings of the University of Mississippi.

These Sisters were on the scene, amid shot and shell, when Gen. Grant besieged Vicksburg. When famine and desolation stalked through Confederate camps and cities the Sisters of Mercy followed the ill-fated army, devoting themselves with all the aspirations of their souls to the one absorbing purpose of solacing human misery in attending to the sick and binding up the wounds of those who had fallen. During the siege of Jackson they accompanied the wounded in a cross-country expedition, stopping by night wherever they could find shelter until they reached Alabama. At Shelby, Ala., they continued their fatiguing services until the war finally came to a close. It is related that at Shelby, Ala., the Superioress, Mother De Sales, in addition to nursing the wounded soldiers, gathered wood during the nighttime to keep the fires burning in the deserted hotel which they occupied. The convent of the Sisters of Mercy at Vicksburg was taken by Gen. Slocum for a headquarters during the war, but was returned to the Sisters a few months after peace had been restored.

The Sisters of the Holy Cross were numbered among the most efficient and devoted nurses in the country's service during the entire period of the war. No height of self-denial was beyond their capacity or desire. They were under the able direction of Mother Angela (Eliza Gillespie), a woman of great personal magnetism and accomplishments, who was the first cousin of James G. Blaine, one of the ablest Speakers of this House, distinguished as a United States Senator, Secretary of State,

and Republican nominee for the Presidency. She was also related to Gen. Sherman and Gen. Ewing, both stalwart soldiers, who fought for the preservation of the Union. This gifted and highly educated lady was born in West Brownsville, Pa., under the same roof where James G. Blaine first saw the light of day. As children they were reared together and were associated by the most endearing attachments, which lasted throughout their lives. Mother Angela was the foundress of St. Mary's Academy at South Bend, Ind. Prior to her entrance into the Order of the Holy Cross she moved in the most exclusive circles of Washington society.

When the Civil War clouds settled over the country and the need of nurses became pressing, Mother Angela and her associates in religion at the Academy of the Holy Cross volunteered their services as nurses and went out from the fruitful field of education to labor amidst the hazardous enterprises of war. She was accompanied by Dr. Brinton, a Philadelphia physician, who had been one of the first to suggest the sisters as war nurses, and also by the Rev. Louis Lambert, one of the most notable priests of his time. It was Dr. Brinton who introduced Mother Angela to Gen. Grant, who thus addressed her on their meeting:

"I am glad to have you with us, very glad. If there is anything at all I can do for you, I will be glad to do it. I thoroughly appreciate the value of your services and I will give orders to see that you do not want for anything."

Gen. Grant spoke of her ever afterwards as a woman of rare charm of manner, unusual ability, and marvelous executive qualities.

Mother Angela and other members of her order were in charge of hospitals at Mound City, Cairo, and Paducah. From the Academy of the Holy Cross about fourscore



sisters went out to help the sick and wounded in the military hospitals of Louisville, Ky., Paducah, Ky., Cairo, Ill., Mound City, Ill., Memphis, Tenn., St. Louis, Mo., and Washington, D.C. Moreover several of their number served on the *Red Rover*, a floating hospital that plied up and down the Mississippi River.

Many non-Catholic tributes have been paid to the work of the Sisterhoods during the war, but none more cordial than that of Mary A. Livermore, who was a relief worker herself during the struggle. In her book "A Woman's Story of the War" she mentions the general hospital at Cairo as an example of the thoroughness of the work done by the Sisters of the Holy Cross. "There was one general hospital at Cairo, called by the people 'the Brick Hospital.' Here the Sisters of the Holy Cross were employed, one or more to each ward. Here were order, cleanliness, and good nursing." Of the Mound City Hospital the same writer said:

"At the time of my visit the Mound City Hospital was considered the best military hospital in the United States. The most thorough system was maintained in every department. The Sisters of the Holy Cross were employed as nurses, and by their skill, quietness, gentleness, and tenderness were invaluable in the sick ward. Every patient gave hearty testimony to the skill and kindness of the Sisters. The Sisters had nearly broken up their famous schools at South Bend to answer the demand for nurses. If I had ever felt prejudiced against these Sisters as nurses, my experience with them during the war would have dissipated it entirely. The world has known no nobler and more heroic women than those found in the ranks of the Catholic sisterhoods."

The State of Pennsylvania was one of the scenes of great military activity during the war. Located at Harrisburg, the capital city, was Camp Curtin, named after

the governor of the State. In this institution were many sick soldiers who needed the attention of nurses. Early in the year 1862 Surg.-Gen. Smith, of Pennsylvania, requested the Sisters of St. Joseph, whose convent was located at Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, to come to the assistance of these suffering men. Dr. Smith had refused other nurses, having implicit confidence only in these Sisters who, he realized, could overlook the privations of existence in camp and sacrifice personal comfort to the performance of what they would regard only as a Christian duty.

Responding to the application made by the Surgeon-General, twenty-three sisters of this congregation proceeded to Camp Curtin. At the camp were stationed about 3,000 militia, with three matrons in charge, and a number of soldiers who were acting as nurses. Not long after the Sisters entered upon the work, throughout the temporary building signs of neatness, order, and comfort became everywhere visible.

At the Church Hospital, another institution in Harrisburg, three Sisters under the charge of Sister Mary John, took care of the sick who were not able to go to the camp.

A period of three months passed away, whereupon the soldiers at Camp Curtin were summoned to the front, which marked the parting of them and their tender nurses. Upon leaving Camp Curtin the thanks of the State authorities were extended to the Sisters in the following letter addressed by the governor of Pennsylvania to their Superior:

MADAM: During a period of several weeks, amidst the confusion of a constantly changing camp, and amidst an epidemic of measles, with typhoid fever, etc., six of "the Sisters of St. Joseph," sacrificing all personal comfort, ministered faithfully and truly to the comfort and welfare of the sick. Neatness, order and efficient admin-

istration immediately followed their arrival in the camp.

Highly appreciating their valuable services and Christian devotion to the relief of human suffering, the State authorities desire to express to them and your order high appreciation of the self-sacrificing spirit which they exhibited among the sick soldiers, both at Camp Curtin and the Church Hospital in Harrisburg.

By order of:

A. G. CURTIN,  
*Governor of Pennsylvania.*

No time was wasted by these Nuns in proceeding from one scene of action to another. A few days after the closing of Camp Curtin they proceeded farther south to Fortress Monroe, where they were detailed on two floating hospitals, the *Whildden*, a small boat, and the *Commodore*, a large one. On the *Whildden* were three sisters; the rest were on the *Commodore*. The Sisters engaged in this work were Mother Monica, Sister Constantia, Sister Philomena, Sister Patrick, Sister Anselm, Sister Camillus, Sister Mount Carmel, Sister Laurentia, Sister Felix, and Sister Bruno. On the sixth day of May, in company with the Surgeon-General and his assistants, these Sisters went down the James River to bring up the wounded from the battlefield of Yorktown. On arriving they went in small boats to the landing, whither the wounded were being carried from the field. It took all night and part of the next day to place the entire number on board the vessels, many among them being Southern soldiers who had been taken prisoners. With the load of afflicted passengers they proceeded to Philadelphia, the Sisters remaining on board until the patients were transferred to hospitals in that city. Concluding this trying experience, they went back to receive the wounded from the battle near Richmond.

In the meantime, however, the camp at Harrisburg was reopened, and there the sisters immediately resumed their

ministrations. In the course of time their services were no longer needed, and then these Nuns returned to their convent home. All but three of their number have quietly passed out of this life, but their memory is preserved by many an old veteran who pays a pilgrimage annually on Decoration Day to lay a garland on their silent graves.

Several of the Sisters of St. Joseph, of Brooklyn, N. Y., took part in the good offices of supplying relief to the stricken and wounded soldiers during the war. Among these Mother M. de Chantal Keating, whose family name was Jane Keating, deserves special mention for the Christian heroism and devotion she displayed throughout her long life. She was born at Kebra, County Tipperary, Ireland, on September 30, 1833, and came to America in 1852, where she entered St. Mary's Convent, at Williamsburg, N.Y., then the Mother House of the Order of the Sisters of St. Joseph. At the time of her death she was the oldest Mother Superior of the order. She departed this life in the summer of 1917 at the ripe old age of 84 years, having spent 60 years as a Nun in the work of education and religion. The story of a life so full of Christian charity and devotion would make up a volume in itself.

After the Civil War began Mother de Chantal went to Wheeling, W. Va., to become the head of the Community of the Sisters of St. Joseph in that city. For four years during the war, with other members of her community, among them Sister de Sales, she rendered aid and comfort to many distressed and afflicted soldiers at White Sulphur Springs, Montgomery County, Va., and also at Wheeling Hospital, which was rented and used by the Government as a post hospital during the war, she and her devoted companions tenderly nursed the soldiers who were brought in from prisons and neighboring battlefields, never failing to render them ready and sympathetic attention. Mother

de Chantal was one of the nuns who received from the Grand Army of the Republic a bronze medal as a token of her devotion to the soldiers whom she nursed back to health at the Wheeling Hospital. She afterwards made it a practice to wear this medal on Memorial Day every year up to the time she died.

During the trying days between 1861 and 1866 no body of men or women did more for suffering humanity than the patient, zealous Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, near Bardstown, Ky. A score of Sisters from that community offered their services without hope of earthly reward of any character. In November, 1812, the Mother House of this order was a log cabin, and two pious ladies of mature age, Sister Theresa Carico and Miss Elizabeth Wells, made up the community. On January 21, 1813, they were joined by Sister Catherine Spalding, who later in the spring of the same year was chosen as the first Mother Superior. In the course of years, however, between that date and the outbreak of the Civil War, through many trials, the institution grew steadily onward until the humble log cabin had developed into a splendid academy, which spread its refreshing influence throughout the old Blue Grass State.

In the spring of 1861 Bishop Martin P. Spalding sent a formal communication to Gen. Robert Anderson, of Fort Sumter fame, then in command of the Department of Kentucky, tendering the services of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth to nurse the sick and wounded soldiers. Gladly was the offer accepted, and Gen. Anderson wrote as follows:

The Sisters of Charity will nurse the wounded under the direction of the Army surgeons, without any intermediate authority or interference whatever. Everything necessary for the lodging and nursing of the wounded and sick will be supplied to them without putting them to



expense, they giving their service gratuitously. So far as circumstances will allow, they shall have every facility for attending to religious and devotional exercises.

ROBERT ANDERSON,  
*Brigadier General, United States Army.*

In Louisville three large factories had been converted into hospitals and placed in the service of the Government, over which twenty-three Sisters of this order presided. Hundreds of soldiers of the blue and the gray, wounded and stricken with disease—fever, pneumonia, and other ailments—were lying in the cot-lined rooms of the improvised hospitals, among them being little drummer boys and buglers not yet arrived at their teens, who were writhing in pain and agony alongside of these seasoned fighters, all of whom, without distinction as to rank or color of uniform, were there receiving the tender and reverential care of these Sisters.

Though lapse of years has obscured the records of many valiant Sisters who gave up their lives in the service, we can, nevertheless, gather from the testimony yet remaining shining examples of martyrdom among the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth. One single instance will tell the story. It is that of a young Sister, Mary Lucy by name, who volunteered to nurse some of the typhoid cases. During her ministrations she contracted the disease herself from a convalescing patient, and after a few days' illness passed away. So highly was she esteemed that a military funeral was arranged in her honor by the soldiers, who, marching to the beat of muffled drums, bore the remains from the Central Hospital to the Ohio River, where a black-draped gunboat received them and, under a flag of truce, bore them to Uniontown, Ky., the birth-place of this gentle Sister. A short distance away was St. Vincent's Academy. At her own request this was to be her final resting place. There in the community burial

plot she was laid by the soldiers who had watched the coffin day and night until the sod had finally hidden it forever.

One night twelve weary Confederate soldiers marched into Nazareth to solicit the services of the Sisters. They had journeyed from Lexington to ask the Sisters to return with them and nurse their sick and wounded comrades. Their request was immediately granted, and that same night, late though it was, protected by a flag of truce, they proceeded on their journey, arriving in Lexington at the end of two days. They were ushered into a large hall which had been fitted up for hospital purposes, and there they began immediately to work among the sufferers.

At Bardstown, Ky., where several engagements had kept the place alternately in possession of Union and Confederate troops, there was a hospital under the care of the same order of Nuns. Western Kentucky was then a place of military operations, and Gen. Smith, in command of Union forces, called upon the Sisters in Paducah to nurse the soldiers. The Sisters from St. Mary's Academy responded, taking over the Baptist Church for the carrying on of their work.

The Sisters of Nazareth Community were in every place where there was suffering and sorrow. They served with distinction in Louisville, Paducah, Bowling Green, Owensboro, and Calhoun, Ky. At Calhoun two Protestant churches, sheltered the sick and wounded, and in both these edifices the Sisters labored with the same devotedness which they had shown in other localities.

Many branch houses of this congregation were converted into hospitals, but the Mother House at Nazareth kept on as an educational institution, though at times the Sisters were apprehensive that the school would have to be abandoned. Both armies were operating in the neigh-

borhood, and the Sisters feared that harm might come to the seventy northern and southern children who were pupils in this institution. Their fears were allayed, however, by a letter addressed by Gen. Wood, of the Union forces, to Mother Columba, who had made known her fears to him.

TO THE LADY SUPERIOR AND SISTERS OF THE CONVENT OF NAZARETH :

I hasten to apprise you that it is my earnest desire and intention to afford you perfect protection and the enjoyment of all your rights, both as an institution and as ladies individually. It is my earnest wish and intention to secure you and your ancient institution, which has educated so many fair daughters of my own native State, Kentucky, from all molestation and intrusion; and to this end I pray you will not hesitate to make known to me any grievances you may have on account of any misconduct on the part of any officer or soldier under my command. I assure you it will be equally my duty and my pleasure to attend to any request you may have to make. I beg you to dismiss all apprehensions on account of the presence of soldiery in your sacred neighborhood and to continue your peaceful and beneficent vocation as if the clangor of arms did not resound in our midst.

I have the honor to be, ladies, your very obedient servant,

TH. J. WOOD,

*Brigadier General, Commanding.*

During the same period of confusion President Lincoln also sent a card to Mother Columba, which read as follows :

Let no depredation be committed upon the property or possessions of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, near Bardstown, Ky.

A. LINCOLN.

From Louisville in February, 1862, the Surgeon in charge wrote to Mother Frances Gardner :

I regret very much to have to inform you of the death of Sister Catherine at the General Hospital of this city. She, as well as the other Sisters at the hospital, has been untiring and most efficient in nursing sick soldiers. The military authorities are under the greatest obligations to your order.

No more glowing tribute has ever been paid to this order than that recently expressed by Gen. R. B. Brown, of Ohio, a soldier of renown and former Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, in the following extract from a letter written by him to Ohio's representatives in the United States Senate:

There is only written in heaven a true story of the holy devotion of the various sisterhoods of the great Catholic Church and other religious societies to the sick and wounded soldiers of both the Union and the Confederate Armies during the early months of the mighty struggle. I was a boy in 1861-2, sick unto death at the Planters' Hotel in Louisville, Ky. But for the unceasing zeal of a Sister of Charity the issue of that illness might have been different. I do not admit that I owe my life to human ministrations, but if I do I owe it to that sweet-faced Sister of Charity, whose name I never knew, and from whence she came I only learned during the campaign of 1912—a Sister from the Mother House at Nazareth, Ky. Of the eight who served in that hospital, but one, now 82 years old, was alive at that time (Oct. 1912).

I am moved to write you without delay, asking that this righteous and long-delayed bill receive your support, as I do not for a moment doubt that it will. All honor to the Loyal Ladies' Auxiliary, Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, in initiating this movement. I shall esteem it a great privilege to contribute to this enterprise. I feel very certain that the American Congress will promptly make this resolution a law.

Very cordially, yours,

(Gen.) R. B. BROWN.

This institution at Nazareth, Ky., which furnished so

many nurses for the camps and hospitals during the War between the States, is noted for its distinguished patrons and graduates. Among its patrons were Henry Clay, who sent his daughter, granddaughter, and great-granddaughter there; Judge Benjamin Winchester; John J. Crittenden, Judge John Rowan; Zachary Taylor; Jefferson Davis, James Guthrie; George D. Prentiss; and Charles Wickliffe. The graduates include Sarah Knox Taylor, daughter of President Zachary Taylor and first wife of Jefferson Davis; Madame Henrietta Spalding, Superior of the Sacred Heart Convent in Chicago; Mary Eliza, daughter of James Breckinridge, of Kentucky; Mary Gwendoline Caldwell, the original benefactress of the Catholic University of America; the wife of United States Senator Vance, of North Carolina; the four nieces of Jefferson Davis, all converts; Mary Anderson, whose professional career is as much a matter of pride to the good Sisters as are her private virtues; and Mary Florence Taney, the author of the volume entitled "Kentucky Pioneer Women."

Out amidst the mountain scenery in one of the most beautiful portions of Maryland stands the Mother House of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, about half a mile south of the village of Emmitsburg. A log house on the mountain side was the original home of this benevolent community. From here this order, founded by Elizabeth Bayley Seton, began its works of charity half a century before the outbreak of the Civil War. Little did the foundress of this institution then realize that within that neighborhood would one day be fought the bloodiest battle in American history. Little, too, did she realize that the Sisters of this community were destined during the progress of that battle and afterwards to give to the world one of the grandest exemplifications of Christian heroism ever displayed on this continent.

The village of Emmitsburg is but ten miles distant



from the memorable battlefield of Gettysburg, the scene of the great military drama which marked the turning point of the Civil War. History records the fact that more than 140,000 men were engaged in that sanguinary struggle. In the three days of fighting 2,834 Union soldiers were killed and 14,492 were wounded. On the Confederate side 5,500 were killed and 25,500 were wounded.

On the Sunday morning after the third day Rev. James Francis Burlando, accompanied by a dozen Sisters, left Emmitsburg to go through the rain-drenched and mud-clogged roads which led to the scenes of carnage. After great difficulty they arrived. Never did human eyes behold such a spectacle! Soldiers slain or half dead lay before them groaning in ghastly heaps, some calling for aid and others gasping alongside hundreds of breathless steeds whose nostrils no longer scented the grimy smoke of battle. Here among these ruins of life thousands of guns, side arms, wheels, projectiles, and all sorts of military accouterments were promiscuously scattered. Into the midst of these grim ravages of war went these noble messengers of peace and charity, with hardly an inch of ground to step on, and helped to pick up the wounded and carry them to attending farm wagons which had been requisitioned as ambulances.

From the labor of assisting on the battlefield, the Sisters proceeded to the town of Gettysburg, which by this time had become a hive of improvised hospitals. Every large building in the town was converted into a hospital and filled as fast as the awkward ambulances could carry the wounded from the field. In addition, many private homes were transformed into relief stations. Altogether there were 113 hospitals in and around Gettysburg. The Catholic Church was strewn with the sick and wounded, Transylvania College contained more than 600 sufferers, and the Methodist Church was also busy with hospital activi-

ties. In all these places the Sisters of Charity were in attendance. Besides the numbers interned in these temporary hospitals, thousands were shipped to Satterlee Hospital at West Philadelphia, a military hospital in charge of Dr. Walter S. Atlee, a prominent physician. To this institution the Sisters of Charity had come in June, 1862, as a result of an interview between Dr. Atlee, Surg.-Gen. Hammond, and Secretary Stanton. Many carloads of soldiers were brought there from Gettysburg. It was a large establishment, with a number of tents auxiliary to the main institution. Soldiers were brought there from Bull Run as well as from Gettysburg, and conservative estimates show that during the period of their ministrations at Satterlee Hospital the Sisters of Charity took care of 50,000 sick and wounded soldiers.

Sister Mary Gonzaga (Mary Agnes Grace) was in charge of the work in this institution. A large portion of her interesting career, which began at Emmitsburg in 1827, when she was received into the community of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, has already been spent at St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum in Philadelphia, where many soldiers from Bull Run had received careful treatment.

No narrative of the labors of these Sisters at Satterlee Hospital could be half so edifying as the journal kept by Sister Gonzaga and her coreligionists which appeared in December, 1897, in the records of the American Catholic Historical Society, edited by the late Miss Sarah Trainor Smith and reproduced by Miss Eleanor C. Donnelly in her "Life of Sister Mary Gonzaga Grace," published in 1900.

The work of these Sisters began in the hospital on the 9th day of June, 1862, as a result of a requisition made for Sisters of Charity by Surg.-Gen. Hammond. The journal above referred to states that the hospital grounds

covered an area of 15 acres and that the buildings when completed contained 33 wards, each accommodating 75 patients. On the 16th day of August, 1862, over 1,500 soldiers were brought in, most of them from the Battle of Bull Run.

Besides the usual maladies to be found in such an institution there were a number of cases of smallpox, and the patients afflicted with this disease were removed to the smallpox hospital several miles from the city. But, in the course of a short time, the surgeon in charge obtained permission to keep the smallpox cases in the camp at some little distance from the hospital and, accordingly, an order was issued, much to the joy and gratification of the patients who were afflicted with this contagious disease. During a period of seven months there were 90 cases of smallpox, and all of them, including the number removed as well as the number allowed to remain near the camp, were entirely under the care of the Sisters.

From June 9, 1862, until August 3, 1863, ninety-one Sisters had been on duty there. Though the war was over in April, 1865, the Sisters remained at the request of the physicians until the hospital was finally abandoned. In the three and a quarter years that were spent by the Sisters in this institution uniform harmony prevailed; not a single discordant note ever marred the concord and coöperation among the officers, the physicians, and the Sisters.

The Satterlee Military Hospital was not the only institution that was under the management of these Sisters. All the Sisters that could be spared went forth from the Mother House at Emmitsburg to do the nursing on battlefields and in various camps and hospitals. Appeals for Sisters from various quarters, both North and South, had widely separated the members of the Emmitsburg community. In response to a telegram from the authorities

some went to Harpers Ferry, leaving Emmitsburg for this destination June 8, 1861. Sisters were permitted to pass through the lines of either army without interruption, for the religious garb was a badge which everywhere commanded respectful attention. Harpers Ferry is a rugged old town located in the angle formed by the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers. The town is buried in the surrounding hills. At Bolivar Heights above was the military hospital, where the Sisters were to continue their pious avocations.

This hospital was filled with the sick and wounded, but provisions were scarce, owing to the fact that the town had been by turns in possession of both the contending armies. The stay of the Sisters was very short, for a telegram was received not many days after their arrival ordering the Confederate troops to Winchester. The entire equipment, Sisters and all, proceeded at once to that place. In a large hospital in Winchester, to which all the Confederate troops had come from Harpers Ferry, these Sisters resumed their labors, remaining there until the Confederates had later removed all their sick and wounded comrades to Richmond.

On July 14, 1862, the Surgeon-General at Washington called for one hundred Sisters to come to White House, Va., where many thousands of wounded had been brought from recent battles. Notwithstanding the number of Sisters already in the service, sixty others immediately set out in response to this request. This place was then in possession of the northern forces. Gen. George B. McClellan, then chief in command, who was some miles distant at the time, sent orders that every possible care and attention should be offered to the Sisters. But the presence of the opposite forces in this vicinity made it necessary to leave the place very soon, and accordingly the wounded and dying men were hurriedly placed upon

transport boats and transferred to other places, a detachment of Sisters going along with them. So oppressive were the hardships on this voyage that one of the Sisters died of exhaustion, another martyr added to the list. The remaining Sisters not engaged with the sick returned to Baltimore, only to receive a hasty summons to go to Point Lookout, a place at the southern extremity of Maryland, where the waters of the Potomac commingle with those of Chesapeake Bay. Twenty-five Sisters went from Baltimore to Point Lookout, and here, two weeks after their arrival, another Sister died, succumbing to the ravages of typhoid fever. There they buried this heaven-born Sister, Consolata Conlon, down where the Potomac rolls quietly into the bay. In the summer of 1862 Point Lookout was covered with shacks containing soldiers, many of them Confederate prisoners, agonizing under the pangs of suffering and disease. To-day, however, there is scarcely anything to be seen at Point Lookout except a Government lighthouse.

Late in August, 1862, Dr. Williams, who was medical director of the Army of the Potomac, hastily summoned a party of Sisters to wait upon the sick and wounded at Manassas, where a very severe battle had recently occurred. Five Sisters went there immediately from Richmond and found 500 patients from both armies in a sad and neglected condition awaiting their arrival. These Sisters conducted their gentle ministrations in the temporary hospitals which had been erected there until finally they received orders from Gen. Johnson to pack up quietly and prepare to leave on short notice.

We next find them in the military hospital at Gordonsville taking care of 200 patients, and subsequently at Danville administering to the needs of 400 sick and wounded. At Lynchburg, too, they faithfully served 1,000 patients, some of them half starved owing to a scar-



city of food. But their stay here was short. The Federal troops were approaching, and it was decided, therefore, to abandon Lynchburg and remove the sick and all the hospital stores to Richmond.

On the 17th of September, 1862, the Battle of Antietam was fought, and thousands on both sides were killed and as many more left wounded on the field. To the relief of these men Sisters of Charity went out direct from Emmitsburg, making straightway their path to the battlefield, where they labored assiduously among the wounded and dying. Gen. McClellan was operating in the vicinity, and on approaching the scene of their ministrations he immediately disclosed his identity and said:

"I am Gen. McClellan, and I am happy and proud to see the Sisters of Charity with these poor men."

Sisters of Charity from Emmitsburg had been in Richmond since the early part of June, 1861. They gave over their infirmary in that city for the use of the wounded soldiers. Here they were summoned by Dr. Gibson, who had charge of the military hospital in the Confederate capital. This hospital became known as St. Anne's Military Hospital and received the wounded from Philippi, Big Bethel, Romney, Rich Mountain, Carricks Ford, and Manassas, Va. Many other hospitals were opened in and around Richmond with the Sisters in charge. They were at Richmond when the city fell. On the arrival of the Federal troops a Union officer rode at once to their quarters and informed them that their property would be held sacred, and that a special guard would be detailed for their protection. There were about 1,000 prisoners in the southern capital and about 5,000 sick and wounded. The Sisters remained in Richmond until the sick and wounded were able to leave the hospitals, whereupon they returned to their home at Emmitsburg with the gratitude and affection of the soldiers of both armies.

More than two hundred of these Emmitsburg Sisters gave watchful care and attention to thousands of afflicted and battle-scarred sons of the North and South who had fallen in the heat of battle. With the greatest ease they turned from one line of action to another. In their starched cornettes of Normandy, they were familiar and pathetic figures as they went from battlefield to hospital, finding no difficulty in plying their labors, always open-hearted, meek, and humble, shrinking from no labor and fearing no suffering.

When the war ended and peace reigned throughout the country the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul went back to their accustomed pre-war occupations, where they kept the noiseless tenor of their way, thrice blessed by the tender mercies they displayed amidst the sufferings and the sorrows of the men in the Blue and the Gray.

Sister Mary Gonzaga Grace, who served with distinction at Satterlee Hospital, returned whence she had come—to St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum at Philadelphia—and there ended her earthly career in October, 1897. In her demise there passed out of this life a woman of boundless charity, whose ministrations among thousands of Union and Confederate soldiers contributed a note of beauty to the many harassing details of the war.

During the latter period of her life grateful soldiers whom she had nursed during the war frequently came to see her. One of these who had heard of her serious illness called to inquire about her, and afterwards sent the following tribute to the Philadelphia Evening Star as "A soldier's tribute to the noble work of Mother Gonzaga during the war":

In your valuable paper dated yesterday the announcement was made that Mother Gonzaga, in charge of St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum, southwest corner of Seventh and Spruce Streets, was lying dangerously ill. In recit-

ing her many acts of charity for the young orphans under her care and protection, victims of epidemics, etc., during the many years of her life, you were not aware that the short notice touched a tender chord of affection in the breast of many a veteran of the late war.

Mother Gonzaga was a mother of 60,000 soldiers, as patients under treatment in Satterlee United States Army Hospital, Forty-fourth and Pine Streets, from 1862 until 1865. Those who were under her care, no matter of what religion or creed, when they received the midnight visits of Mother Gonzaga, her silent steps after "taps" and by the dim gaslight, will recognize her familiar countenance surrounded by that white winged hood or cowl, just bending her form to hear the faint breath or whisper of some fever patient or some restless one throwing off the bed clothes; she kindly tucking them in around his body as a mother would a child: then a visit to the dying to give them expressions of comfort. Those who recall these scenes, I say, think of her truly as an angel of peace and sweetness.

Administering medicine when required, loosening a bandage or replacing the same, watching a case of a sufferer in delirium—at all times annoying to those near him—was her daily duty. To see her always calm, always ready, with modesty and fidelity, faithfully performing a Christian duty as an administering angel when physicians, surgeons, friends and all human aid had failed, was a beautiful sight. No poet could describe, no artist could faithfully portray on canvas the scenes at the deathbed of a soldier, that would convey to those not having witnessed them the solemnity of the quiet kneeling, the silent prayer, a murmur faintly heard as a whisper, a Sister of Charity, paying her devotion to Him on high, and consigning the spirit of the dying soldier to His care.

As one of the many thousands under her care, I shall always think of Mother Gonzaga as one of a constellation of stars of the greatest magnitude—surrounded by many others that were devoted servants, among whom I would mention Dorothea Dix, Annie M. Ross, Hettie A. Jones, and Mary Brady. We soldiers can not forget the service they rendered.

J. E. McLANE.

Not long ago, when the Battle Cry of Peace was playing in New York, Capt. Jack Crawford, the poet-scout, appeared at each performance to plead for national preparedness. He was famous as a scout in the Union Army during the Civil War. After the war he had become popular as a lecturer. Once, while lecturing in a Middle West town, the following tribute to the Sisterhoods fell from his lips:

"My friends, on all God's green and beautiful earth there are no purer, no nobler, no more kind-hearted, and self-sacrificing women than those who wear the somber garb of Catholic Sisters. During the war I had many opportunities for observing their noble and heroic work, not only in the camps and hospitals, but on the death-swept field of battle. Right in the fiery front of war I have seen the black-robed Sisters moving over the field. My friends, I am not a Catholic, but I stand ready at any and all times to defend these noble women, even with my life, for I owe my life to them."

This eloquent tribute pronounced by the poet-scout will meet the concurrence of many an old surviving veteran to-day.

Before concluding the story of the Emmitsburg Sisters I shall digress for a moment to relate one of the most touching episodes of the war. It sums up the self-sacrificing devotion of a Sister of Charity from Emmitsburg in caring for a youthful soldier, Thomas Trahey, of Detroit, a member of Company H, Sixteenth Michigan Volunteer Infantry. The Sister was Regenia La Croix, a French-Canadian by birth, and known in religion as Sister Louise.

Grit and gratitude were characteristics deeply set in the personality of Trahey. The former he displayed throughout the trying incidents of the war and the latter for many years after its termination. Wounded at

Fredericksburg, he recovered, but after the Battle of Gettysburg he was stricken first with typhoid fever and immediately afterwards with smallpox. As he lay in the hospital at Frederick City, Sister Louise, the young and beautiful Canadian religieuse, stayed at his bedside and personally nursed him through the agonies of both these ravaging diseases. Upon recovering he went back to the front and again was wounded at White Oak Road, Va.

Soon afterwards the war came to a close, and Trahey went home impaired in health but bearing with him most precious memories of the faithful Sister of Charity, to whose prayers and ministrations he was sure he owed his life. A few years passed away before Trahey regained his strength, and then he resolved to locate this kind-hearted Sister and convey to her his gratitude in person. Where to find her he did not know, so he wrote to the Mother House at Emmitsburg, only to be informed that two years after the war the faithful Sister had died. Her remains had been laid in Calvary Cemetery, at St. Louis. To this spot the battle-scarred veteran made an annual journey on Memorial Day to pay his respects to her memory. But a boundless gratitude like his must take a form of expression more tangible than the mere laying of flowers annually upon the Sister's grave. Trahey decided to purchase a monument in the shape of a rustic stone cross, to be set over the Sister's grave, little reckoning, however, that his plans were in conflict with the established rules of the cemetery. Meeting with the opposition of the church authorities, he appealed to Sister Magdalena, the local superior of the order, who, moved by the pathos of his story, interceded in behalf of the project. Now the simple monument stands over the grave bearing humble testimony to the gratitude of a stout-hearted soldier for the deeds of heroism and devotion performed by this dark-robed Sister of Charity. Upon this monument, the only



memorial of its kind in the country, the following inscription may be seen:

To Sister Regenia La Croix.  
Died March, 1867, in this city.  
Erected as a tribute of gratitude  
From an old soldier.

T. T.

During the siege of New Orleans the faithful Sisters of Charity were busily engaged in assuaging the sorrows and sufferings of those who were wounded during the historical bombardment and taking of that city by the coöperative action of Gen. Butler by land and Admiral Farragut by sea. Among these humble Sisters of Charity in New Orleans was Sister Mary Gabriel (Kraft), whose generous deeds of kindness and benevolence won for her the esteem and admiration of all whom she assisted during that distracting period of our country's history. She labored not only in New Orleans but in many other places through the South, notably at Mobile, Ala., and Holly Springs, Miss. At Corinth, Miss., Sisters of Charity from Mobile, Ala., were in control of the military hospital. They also served at Jacksonville, Miss., bestowing their bountiful charities upon the helpless soldiers who lay sick and wounded in a large hotel that had been appropriated for hospital purposes.

After the capture of New Orleans Admiral Farragut proceeded up the Mississippi with his gunboats and hurled heavy broadsides into some of the towns along its banks. In shelling Donaldsonville the property of the Sisters of Charity was damaged. The Sisters presented a protest to Gen. Butler, who had made his headquarters at St. Charles Hotel in New Orleans, and from him they received the following reply:

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE GULF,  
*New Orleans, La., September 2, 1862.*

TO THE SUPERIOR OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY.

MADAME: I had no information until the reception of your note that so sad a result to the sisters of your community had happened from the bombardment of Donaldsonville. I am very, very sorry that Rear Admiral Faragut was unaware that he was injuring your establishment by his shells. Any injury must have been entirely accidental. \* \* \*

No one can appreciate more highly than myself the holy, self-sacrificing labors of the Sisters of Charity. To them old soldiers are daily indebted for the kindest offices. Sisters to all mankind, they know no nation, no kindred, neither war nor peace. Their all-pervading charity is like the boundless love of "Him who died for all," whose servants they are, and whose pure teachings their love illustrates.

I repeat, my grief that any harm should have befallen your society of sisters, and will cheerfully repair it as far as I may, in the manner you suggest, by filling the order you have sent to the city for provisions and medicine. Your sisters in the city will also further testify to you that my officers and soldiers have never failed to do to them all in our power to aid them in their usefulness and to lighten the burden of their labors.

With sentiments of the highest respect, believe me,

Your friend,

BENJ. F. BUTLER.

Higher up the Mississippi River is the city of Natchez, Miss., which was also bombarded by the Federal gunboat *Essex*. In Natchez the Sisters of Charity had conducted an orphan asylum from which all the inmates had been removed. Three of the Sisters from this institution, at the request of Gen. Blanchard, left Natchez to go to Monroe, La., where there were many Southern soldiers in need of hospital treatment. These Sisters crossed the Mississippi River in a skiff in the dead of night in order

to meet the conveyance at Vidalia on the opposite side of the river, which was there to take them to their destination on an overland route of about 100 miles. After three days they arrived at Monroe and began the work of ministering to the afflicted soldiers. There were a number of cases of fever and malaria, but no epidemic prevailed. Much of the illness there was caused by the ordinary fatigues and hardships of war. Altogether there were about one hundred patients who came within the ministrations of the Sisters. The Sisters remained at Monroe for a year, at the end of which time, Gen. Blanchard proposed to move his troops to Shreveport and requested the Sisters to go along with the regiment. Circumstances prevented them from making the journey, and instead they were sent back to Natchez by Gen. Blanchard, under a flag of truce, with a detachment of seven soldiers and a captain, the soldiers riding on horseback and the Sisters proceeding in a carriage.

The black-cap Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati bore an important part in the works of mercy during the war. Most prominent among them was Sister Anthony O'Connell, a modest and unpretending woman, who was born in Limerick, Ireland, and came with her parents to this country at an early age. Her earlier years were spent in the Mother House at Emmitsburg, Md. She was in charge of the community at Cincinnati when Gov. David Tod, of Ohio, issued a call for volunteer nurses at the outbreak of the war. To this call Sister Anthony and a group of Sisters responded. Most of their work was done around Nashville, Camp Dennison, about 15 miles from Cincinnati, Shiloh, Richmond, New Creek, Gallipolis, and Cumberland. These Sisters spent many months at Nashville, administering both to Union and Confederate soldiers. Though comparisons are unknown among the various orders, a reference to the work of Sister Anthony

will be pardoned, for it stood out in bold relief from that of all other war-nursing Sisters. She herself tells the story of Shiloh as follows:

At Shiloh we ministered to the men on board what were popularly known as the floating hospitals. We were often obliged to move farther up the river, being unable to bear the terrific stench from the bodies of the dead on the battlefield. This was bad enough, but what we endured on the field of battle while gathering up the wounded is simply beyond description. \* \* \*

The soldiers were remarkably kind to one another. They went around the battlefield giving what assistance they could, placing the wounded in comfortable places, administering cordials, etc., until such time as the nurses could attend to the wounded and sick. I remember one poor soldier whose nose had been shot off, who had almost bled to death and would have been missed had we not discovered him in a pen, where some kind comrade had placed him before he left the field, every other place of refuge being occupied. \* \* \*

Day often dawned on us only to renew the work of the preceding day without a moment's rest.

In a soldier's diary we find this tribute to Sister Anthony:

Amid this sea of blood she performed the most revolting duties for those poor soldiers. She seemed like a ministering angel, and many a young soldier owes his life to her care and charity. Happy was the soldier who, wounded and bleeding, had her near him to whisper words of consolation and courage. She was revered by blue and gray, Protestant and Catholic, alike; and we conferred on her the title of the "Florence Nightingale of America." Her name became a household word in every section of the North and South.

After the Battle of Shiloh or Pittsburg Landing the Sisters sailed down the Mississippi River, intending to go to Corinth, but they encountered grave dangers from ob-

structions in the river and it appeared for a while that all on board would be lost. The captain counseled flight for safety, but the Sisters heroically refused to harken to his admonitions. Women who were not terrified by the sights they had already seen could not be dismayed, even though death stared them in the face. They resolved, therefore, that, come what may, they would not forsake the wounded boys, but would remain on board and share their fate to the end. The excitement was at length allayed by the advent of two pilots who came on board and skillfully steered the vessel to its destination.

Many of the Sisters with whom she worked fell upon the field of duty, but Sister Anthony lived on and enjoyed a peaceful old age. She died December 8, 1897, at St. Joseph's Infant Asylum at Norwood, Ohio, where she had lived during the last few years of her life. Her death brought forth expressions of regret from many military organizations, which took formal action in manifestation of their regard for this faithful nun.

The William H. Lytle Post, Grand Army of the Republic, passed the following resolution of respect:

Whereas the venerable Sister Anthony departed this life on Wednesday afternoon, after a life of usefulness in taking care of the sick and doing boundless charity; and

Whereas she was one of the most active nurses during the war, doing many kind, silent acts; and

Whereas she will be buried from St. Peter's Cathedral Saturday, at 9 o'clock: Therefore be it

*Resolved*, That in order to show our gratitude and affection for her and appreciation of her services as an Army nurse, we attend her funeral and invite all other posts to participate with us.

The following beautiful description of the funeral and interment of Sister Anthony appeared in the Cincinnati Tribune on December 12, 1897:



Friday afternoon the remains of Sister Anthony were brought to the Good Samaritan Hospital, where they lay in state in the chapel, visited by hundreds of sorrowing friends. A great number of girls employed in factories near the hospital visited the chapel after working hours to pay a last tribute of respect to her who was at all times their friend and confidante in times of trouble. It was at the earnest request of the sisters at the hospital that the remains of Sister Anthony were brought in. They wanted to have her with them once more for the last time amid the scenes of her noblest work, to pray beside her bier and bid a last farewell to the spirit which they all emulate. Visitors thronged the chapel far into the night, and there was little rest for the sisters, who were up at dawn and in the chapel again, where the Rev. Father Finn, of the Society of Jesus, sang requiem mass, assisted by the St. Xavier's choir, under the direction of Mr. Boex. When the time came for the departure to the cathedral a number of the friends joined in singing "Lead, Kindly Light" and "Sweet Spirit, Hear my Prayer," while the body was borne from the chapel. These two beautiful hymns were the favorites of Sister Anthony, and she would have wished that they be sung at her funeral. In the cathedral, the temple of the religion she loved and worked and prayed for, two veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic, bearing aloft flags of their country draped in somber black, stood sentinels at the bier. There was the procession of priests and companies of Sisters of Charity instead of the rank and file of soldiery; there were embroidered robes and black habits in place of the blue and gray; there were candles instead of camp fires; there was the chime of bells and the chanting of the choir instead of the call of trumpets and the beat of drums; there was the organ pealing instead of the musketry roll; there was the fragrance of incense instead of the smoke of the battlefield; there was the counting of beads instead of the binding of wounds; there was the bier and the sable pall instead of the hospital stretcher; there were the whispered prayers of 2,000 people on bended knees for the repose of the soul of Sister Anthony. The morning light streamed dimly and softly through the stained

glass windows, and electric lights took the place of the stars in heaven's blue canopy, but it was the bivouac of the dead. The ministering angel to soldiers, the comfort of widows and orphans, the friend of the poor, the sick, and the unfortunate was dead, and about her, come to do her honor, were soldiers, orphans, and widows; those who had been poor and sick and unfortunate, her greatest care in life. The altars of the church were draped in black, and with high requiem mass and eulogies the priests of the church paid tribute to a noble member of their sisterhood.

Far up above the Ohio, on a beautiful plateau, with a view for miles in every direction, is the mother house of the Sisters of Charity, founded away back in the thirties by pioneers of the order from Emmitsburg, Md. Here is the grave of Sister Anthony. She lies beside Mother Regina Mattingly and Mother Josephine Harvey, who were with her when she first came West, and with her helped to found the mother house. To-day they sleep together in the little graveyard and near the home they made for their sisterhood. Their graves are in a little grove of birches and evergreens and surrounded by the graves of their sisters who had gone before. Their graves are marked by simple stone crosses, bearing their names in the world and in religion. When the funeral train reached the house the sisters, headed by their chaplain, received the body and bore it to the chapel, where it lay in state for two hours. The sisters wanted their dear friend for that long at least, for the mother house she always considered her home, and they regarded her as a mother and loved her as such, for to all she was ever the same sweet, lovely, and loving friend. The services for the dead were read by the Right Rev. Bishop Byrne, after which the body was borne to the grave. With slow and solemn tread the long file of black-robed sisters marched before. A drizzling rain had begun to fall, and in the murky atmosphere the scene took on a solemnity and grandeur impossible to picture. The sisters chanting prayers and the priests following in their purple robes and their heavy bass voices joining in had a beautiful effect. As the procession neared the burying ground "The

Miserere" was chanted by all. There were very few at the graveside besides those connected with the church. Thus ended the earthly career of this "Angel of the Battlefield."

Sister Anthony was personally acquainted with many of the most prominent generals who took part in the war, among them being Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, McClellan, and Rosecrans, Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy, was also well known to her.

In *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* is found an article by Jacob D. Cox, major general, United States Volunteers, ex-Governor of Ohio and ex-Secretary of the Interior, concerning the work of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, from which the following is quoted:

The Sisters of Charity, under the lead of Sister Anthony, a noble woman, came out in force, and their black and white robes harmonized picturesquely with the military surroundings as they flitted about under the rough timber framing of the old barn, carrying comfort and hope from one rude couch to another.

The scene was Camp Dennison, and the old barn was an improvised camp hospital, organized for the purpose of taking care of the number of contagious diseases aggravated in form and made worse on account of exposure.

Another foundation of the Black-Cap Sisters of Charity had been established in New York City several years before the Civil War began. A quaint little house, famous for Revolutionary memories, located upon an eminence at One hundred and ninth Street and Fifth Avenue, was the original Mother House of the congregation. On this site sprang up the Academy of Mount St. Vincent in September, 1847. But twelve years later, when the new

Central Park was established, the academy property, being within an area inclosed for that purpose, was abandoned and a new structure was erected at Font Hill on Hudson, where a flourishing academy—Mount St. Vincent on Hudson—has ever since been conducted by the Sisters of Charity. During the second year of the war, in September, 1862, the old academy building was given to the Government for use as a military hospital by the commissioners of the new Central Park, who, in the following letter, addressed to the Secretary of War, requested that the Sisters of Charity be selected as nurses for soldiers wounded in the struggle:

16 WALL STREET, September 9, 1862.

Hon. EDWIN STANTON,

*Secretary of War.*

The commissioners of the Central Park of this city have given a very large building for a Government hospital for the reception of wounded soldiers. This building was formerly a Catholic school of high order. The point is this: We want the nurses of the hospital to be the Sisters of Charity, the most faithful nurses in the world. Their tenderness, their knowledge, and religious convictions of duty render them by far the best nurses around the sick bed which have ever been found on earth. All that is asked is that they be permitted to be nurses under the direction of the War Department and its physicians. Alderman Farley, of this city, will take this letter. I beg you to consider this matter and to do what is possible, and you will truly oblige your numerous friends, and especially,

Your friend, every truly,

EDWARDS PIERPONT.

The request was speedily granted, and the Government authorities appointed Rev. Edward McGlynn as chaplain of the institution. The building was well adapted for hospital purposes, accommodating about two hundred

and fifty wounded soldiers at a time. Here with unaffected humility and boundless charity these pious sisters pursued their daily tasks of caring for the sick and wounded soldiers, meeting without repugnance all sorts of human afflictions, from 1862 to 1866.

Half a century before the Declaration of American Independence the first convent in the present territory of the United States was established by the Ursuline Nuns at New Orleans, La. Members of this same order were among the pioneer settlers in North America.

When John Harvard, in the year 1639, was laying the foundation of what is to-day Harvard University the Ursulines, under the leadership of Mother Mary of the Incarnation, had already gathered about them on the heights of Quebec above the St. Lawrence River the daughters of the French settlers, as well as the maidens of the Indian tribes, in their newly established work of religion and education. The institution they founded there was the first religious house that appeared on the American Continent.

At New Orleans this order had long been flourishing when the Louisiana Territory was purchased from Napoleon and the Stars and Stripes of the United States raised in place of the tricolor of France. The active services of the New Orleans Ursulines were not required during the War between the States, but at an earlier date, during the second war for American independence (1812-1815), they devoted their time and energies to the sick and wounded who were brought into the hospital after the Battle of New Orleans. When they saw from their convent windows the distant smoke rising from the plains of Chalmette, they realized that the battle had begun and immediately they prepared to receive the men who were stricken during that memorable defense of American soil.



In this work they showed a marvelous spirit of patriotism and self-devotion to the needs of the wounded and dying. For this service Gen. Jackson personally thanked them at the time, and again, in after years on the occasion of his visit to New Orleans, he expressed warm feelings of gratitude. He is the only President of the United States who ever stood within the sacred precincts of the old cloister on Charles Street.

During the Civil War, however, the Ursuline nuns of Texas, especially the Galveston community, shared actively in the labors of alleviating the grief and distress of the sick and wounded soldiers. This community was instituted by five Ursulines and three novices, who came from New Orleans in 1847 and laid the foundation in Galveston of the first community of religious established in Texas.

On September 10, 1861, the new wing of the Ursuline convent at Galveston, which was then nearing completion, was offered to the authorities for hospital purposes, and several Ursulines volunteered their services as nurses. They served during the years 1861 and 1862; but their principal ministrations were performed after the siege of Galveston, which occurred on January 1, 1863. Tenderly they cared for the sick and wounded who were brought in from the scenes of destruction wrought by the continuous shelling of the town. In appreciation of the charitable and merciful services rendered by Mother St. Pierre and her loyal band of Ursuline Sisters, her grave in the little convent cemetery in Galveston is annually decorated by the surviving veterans of both the blue and the gray.

The records of the war do not register a single instance of failure or shirking on the part of the sisterhoods, and it must have been an edifying sight indeed to see these pious and unassuming women, whose souls were enriched

with the jewels of heavenly sanctity, as they went from battle field to hospital to apply their tranquil ministrations. No page in all our history can present any nobler deeds of courage and devotion. Easily and without emotion they turned from school and asylum to take up the war duties, and, no matter how appalling were the sights that came before them, they labored with a unity and harmony under the most trying and difficult circumstances.

Many a time has the memory of these war sisters evoked sympathetic expressions of esteem and affection from the wearers of the Blue and the Gray who were the objects of their impartial devotion during the trying days of the war. Lapse of years has depleted the ranks of the veterans on both sides, and only a handful of these sisters still survive the hundreds of dark-robed companions who have long since responded to the summons to their rewards beyond the grave.

No more shall the war cry sever,  
Or the winding rivers be red;  
They banish our anger forever  
When they laurel the graves of our dead—  
Under the sod and the dew,  
Waiting the judgment day—  
Under the one, the Blue;  
Under the other, the Gray.

Too long have we delayed in paying an official tribute of praise and gratitude to the various sisterhoods whose heroic self-sacrifices and benevolent ministrations rescued thousands of soldiers from the grasp of wasting disease and whose constant piety and devotion moved many a convalescing patient as well as an expiring patriot whom the curtain of death was surrounding to utter a humble prayer.

More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?  
For so the whole round world is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

# Mother Cabrini

## *An Apostle of the Italians*

By JAMES J. WALSH

**I**F ever there was a social problem so complex as to seem almost hopelessly insoluble and so many-sided as to perplex and bewilder the best intentioned, it was the welfare of the Italian immigrant in this country at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Not only schools for the poor were needed, but for the better classes as well, where they might find sympathy with their national aspirations and character; hospitals also were necessary to prevent the pitiable condition of sufferers coming to dispensaries and city hospitals with little or no knowledge of English and subject to being unfortunately misunderstood to their own detriment. The hard manual labor in which their fathers were engaged, involving numerous accidents, left many orphan children to be cared for, and in a thousand other ways, also, these willing workers bearing so many difficult burdens of the country, demanded sympathetic assistance. The question was where would one begin, and having begun how carry on and diffuse any social work widely enough to cover these needs not alone in the coast cities of the East, but everywhere where the Italian immigrant had gone or had been brought by others.

Many people, even Catholics, feel that very little has been done, especially by Catholics, for the solution of this vast problem, although it mainly concerns our Italian Catholic brethren. Such a thought, however, betrays ignorance of an immense work that has been developing around us during the last twenty years. The recent death

of Mother Francis Xavier Cabrini at the Columbus Hospital, Chicago (December, 1917), has emphatically called attention to the fine results secured in this important matter by her congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. Not quite seventy when she died, she had established over seventy houses of her religious. Her institute, less than forty years old, numbers its members by thousands. From Italy, where her foundation was made, it has spread to North, South and Central America, as well as France, Spain and England. No wonder that at her death, she was honored by those who knew her work as a modern apostle whose influence for good proved that the arm of the Lord had not been shortened: that He still raised up great personalities to meet the special needs of the Church in all generations.

Mother Francis Xavier Cabrini was born at St. Angelo di Lodi, July 16, 1850. Her parents belonged to the Italian nobility. From her early years she gave evidence of devout piety, and at the age of thirty undertook the organization of a congregation that would devote itself to teaching especially the children of the poor and of training school teachers. Her first house was founded at Codogno in 1880. A series of houses sprang up, during the following years, in and around Milan, and her work having attracted the attention of Leo XIII., she was invited to open a Pontifical School at Rome. This succeeded so admirably, that the Pope saw in it a great agency for the benefit of Italians all over the world. This great Pontiff had been very much attracted by Mother Cabrini's character and her enthusiastic zeal, which overcame obstacles that to many seemed insurmountable.

Accordingly when the foreign missionary spirit developed among her Sisters, Mother Cabrini, knowing the blessing that always accrued to a congregation for missionary work, applied to the Pope for permission to send



her Sisters into the Orient. Pope Leo suggested that her mission lay in exactly the opposite direction. He recommended the Americas, North and South, as a fertile field for the labors of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. Mother Cabrini, receiving the suggestion as a command from God, proceeded to carry it out. A few months later she embarked for America with her Sisters, and assumed charge of a school for the children of Italian immigrants which was opened in New York in connection with the Church of St. Joachim.

Immigration was then at its height, the social problems of the Italians were at a climax, Americans had scarcely awakened to the need of doing anything, the Italian government was aroused to the necessity of accomplishing something, but politics were blocking the way, and it looked as though a little band of Italian Sisters could accomplish very little. Yet in a few years it became evident that this mustard seed was destined to grow into a large tree whose branches would shelter the birds of the air.

Mother Cabrini very soon realized that despite the importance of teaching, there were other crying needs of our Italian population that must be met if there was to be a solid foundation for the solution of social problems among them. Ailing and injured Italians needed the care that could properly be given them only by their own. Seeing in the celebration of the five hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus, then impending, an auspicious moment, Mother Cabrini, in 1892, opened Columbus Hospital in New York. It had an extremely humble beginning in two private houses and with such slender support as would surely have discouraged anything less than the zeal of this foundress, convinced that she was doing God's work on a mission indicated by the Pope himself. Before long, the fortunes of the hospital began to brighten, until now it is one of the rec-

ognized institutions of New York, situated in a commodious building that brings it conspicuously to the notice of New Yorkers. Before the outbreak of the War, plans had been drawn for a ten-story building which should have been finished before this, and would have been one of the most complete hospitals in the country.

But Columbus Hospital was only the beginning. Mother Cabrini's great work of schools for Italian children of the poorer and better classes, was not neglected, but it was now evident that hospitals offered the best chance to win back adult Italians who had abandoned their faith and to influence deeply those who could be brought in no other way under Christian influences. After an Italian had been under the care of these devoted Italian Sisters, it was, indeed, hard for him to neglect his religion as before, and many a family returned to the devout practice of the Faith when the father had had his eyes opened to the practical virtues of religion by his stay in the hospital. Hence, in 1905, Columbus Hospital, Chicago, was founded under extremely difficult conditions. For some time the failure of this enterprise seemed almost inevitable, and Reverend Mother Cabrini's heart was heavy at the prospect of her beloved poor deprived of skilled care. She did not lose courage, however, and she was rewarded, after a particularly trying time in which her greatest consolation and help was prayer, by the assured future of the hospital.

A little later, a branch hospital known as Columbus Extension Hospital, was established for the very poor in the heart of an Italian district in Chicago, at Lytle and Polk Streets. Five years later, Columbus Hospital and Sanitarium in Denver was founded and a few years later Columbus Hospital, Seattle. All of these were in excellent condition, with abundant promise of future usefulness, and healthy development at the time of Mother

Cabrini's death. This holy woman brought to the service of her zeal for religion such good sound common sense and business acumen and efficiency, as to call forth the admiration of all who knew her and who realized what she was accomplishing in the face of unlooked-for and almost insurmountable difficulties.

Municipal and state officials were often staggered at the projects she undertook with apparently utterly inadequate means at her command, but after a struggle and hard work, the abundant success she realized, opened their eyes to the fact that here was not merely an ordinary activity but something so extraordinary as to suggest the assistance of a supernatural agency.

Prominent officials in this country and in Europe, not only in Italy but in France and Spain and England, had learned to admire unstintedly the humble, simple, little Mother of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart who at first appeared a hopeless enthusiast, yet proved on comparatively short acquaintance to be the most practical of women. In explaining how she succeeded in doing things that seemed hopeless to others, she was in the habit of saying: "What do you wish? you men who look at these problems have too much to do, and then you want to do too much all at once. For instance, there is no need of lengthy discussion as to the necessity for protection for immigrants, but what is needed is to put protection for the immigrant into effect. You see I do not discuss, I find that there is a good thing that ought to be done. I set myself and my little institute at work at it at once. I do not despair of finding the means with which to do it. I always feel confident that somehow or other I shall always find them. I do not know quite how it is that I find these, and others do not, but perhaps that is because I am only a little nun whom nobody minds, and therefore perhaps I meet with less opposition and people are

ready to help me." That was all that she was in her own estimation, just "a little nun," but under the modest habit of a nun she possessed a soul constantly open to aspirations and ideals, tenacious of purpose and ready to do anything once she was sure that it would redound to the glory of God by benefiting mankind.

A favorite expression of hers, often repeated to her Sisters and often uttered even in her dealings with secular people, was : "I can do all things in Him that strengthens me." Her entire confidence in God, her utter lack of self-sufficiency, her constant confession that she was but "a poor little nun," bore her triumphantly over all difficulties. Her foundations remind one of St. Teresa's journeys to make her foundations, and of her character and simple-hearted confidence in tackling the most difficult problems under conditions that seemed most forbidding. One recalls the Spanish Saint's reply when told that she was assuming a preposterous task in setting out to found a house of her order with only three ducats at her disposal. The words are famous in the history of religious endeavor : "Teresa and three ducats, can do nothing, but Teresa and three ducats and God can accomplish anything."

Poor St. Teresa made her long journeys either on foot or in an ox-cart. Mother Cabrini's journeys were made under less difficult circumstances, but the length of them probably made them at least as tiresome and trying as those of the Saint three centuries and a half ago. Nothing could give a better idea of the extraordinary vigor and marvelous power of action of the little nun than an account given to one who knew her well:<sup>1</sup> "I came a month ago from South America. I am just setting out for Chicago. After a fortnight there, I expect to go to Los Angeles and probably not long after, I return to the East, from there I shall have to set out for Italy. In the

<sup>1</sup> *Il Carroccio*, January, 1918.

meantime, however, I must try to make it clear to the Commissioner of Immigration that our Columbus Hospital is giving aid directly to the Italians." At that time the statistics of the hospital showed that over 100,000 Italians had been discharged from it cured.

In the midst of her activities in North America she did not forget that the Pope's recommendation had included all the Americas, and so she voyaged to South America in order to lay foundations there. Schools were founded in Argentina, in Brazil and then in Chile and Peru. Once she made the journey over the mountains from one side of the South American Continent to the other—and it must not be forgotten that the Cordilleras are even higher than the Alps—on mule back, running all the risks of that old-fashioned mode of travel. Many a precipice's edge had to be passed on her sure-footed little beast, and once Providence seemed almost to have abandoned her. The animal disappeared with her over a precipice and she was saved, apparently only by a miraculous intervention. Nothing could diminish her zeal, nor quench her enthusiasm for her work. Dangers and trials might come, her one idea was to accomplish as much as possible before the end came, and the darkness set in and no man could labor.

Her South American missionary labors were successful, and she founded houses at Buenos Ayres, Mercedes and Rosario in Argentina, at Rio de Janeiro and San Paolo of Brazil. On her return to the United States there came the call for her Sisters to go to Central America. They tell the story of her sending to New York for one of her Sisters whom she had chosen to be the head of the foundations in Central America, to come to her in Los Angeles. The good Sister's train was delayed and Mother met her almost at the door telling her that she was sorry for the delay of her train, but now no time was to be lost. She must set out at once for Nicaragua.



There were very few words to be said, for it was deeds not words that she loved, and soon the definite foundation of a house in Central America had been made.

At the time of her death there were, as we have said, more houses of her Congregation than she counted years, though her work as a foundress had not begun until nearly half of her life was run. It is said that as a young woman she had in her zeal for missionary labor asked her confessor for permission to join an order of Missionary Sisters that would take her far from home, so that home ties should count for little in life, and should surely not disturb her complete devotion to her vocation. Her confessor replied that he knew of none. There were no missionary sisters in the strict sense of the word and so Mother Cabrini founded the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, which has flourished so marvelously.

Houses of the Congregation are established about Milan, and at Genoa, Turin, Città della Pieve, Monte Compatri, Marsciano; and hospitals and orphan asylums in Paris, London, Madrid, Bilbao, as well as other places in Europe and here in America. The greatest extension of the Congregation has taken place in the United States where, besides the Hospitals already mentioned, there are schools in New York City, the Villa of the Sacred Heart for children of better class parents at Fort Washington Avenue, an orphan asylum at West Park, schools in the parishes of the Transfiguration, of St. Charles in Brooklyn, of St. Rita and the School of Feminine Crafts in connection with the Church of the Madonna of Pompeii. In New Orleans there are two schools and a large orphan asylum; in Chicago, besides two hospitals, there is a school, and in Denver, a school and an orphan asylum, as well as a hospital and sanitarium. There are schools at Newark and West Arlington, N. J.; Scranton, Pa.; at

Dobbs Ferry, N. Y., and a school at Seattle which was the opening wedge for a hospital founded later at this extreme end of the continent. Mother Cabrini took advantage of the sale of a large hotel in that city to secure it for this hospital.

Everywhere she emphasized the Italian origin and spirit of her work. No wonder then that the Ambassador from Italy deeply concerned with the problem of making the Italian people here as happy and contented as possible, but above all of keeping them from being imposed upon in any way, called her his "precious collaborator." "While I may be able to conserve the interests of the Italians," he said, "by what I am able to accomplish through those who are in power, she succeeds in making herself loved and esteemed by the suffering, the poor, the children, and thus preserves these poor Italians in a foreign country."

In spite of her devoted Italian sentiments, she drew her postulants from practically every nationality in the country. Many an Irish girl, after looking into Mother Cabrini's wonderful eyes, felt it her vocation to help this wonderful little woman in the work she had in hand. She won all hearts to herself, but only for the sake of the Master, and so it is that in the course of scarcely more than twenty-five years, her Congregation counts nearly five hundred members here in America. It has some three thousand throughout the world, all intent on accomplishing the social work that has been placed in their care, and of solving the problems brought about by the huge Italian immigration to the Americas in the eighties and nineties of the last century.

When the Italians entered the War, Mother Cabrini, by cable, mobilized her Sisters in Italy for the aid of their native country in every way possible. The houses of the Congregation were transformed into hospitals and refuges for the convalescent, as well as asylums for the sons and

daughters of those who had fallen on the field of battle. Her devotion to her Italian people was so great, *Il Carroccio*, or as it is called in English, *The Italian Review*, published in New York, compares her to Florence Nightingale, for what she has accomplished both in peace and in war. Nor may anyone who knows all the circumstances of her work, deny that the comparison is more than justified.

Scarcely more than a generation has passed, and Mother Cabrini has thousands of coworkers and many hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries. What will the fruit of her labors mean three generations from now, if anything like the original initiative be maintained? Only the future can reveal the full significance of her story. One thing is certain, that after reading the brief sketches of her life that have thus far appeared, we may not doubt that God still provides the necessary agents for great works. When needs are most crying, some one is raised up who is equal to them. When conditions are at their worst, some one comes to find a way out of the difficulties. After the pioneer work is done, its difficulties are lost sight of by those who enjoy its results. But the pioneer succeeds only by the personal immolation of self and the ability to lead others by the same heights of sacrifice.

# Mother Mary

## *Of the Sick Poor*

By THOMAS M. SCHWERTNER, O. P.

SOME sixty years ago a young girl born in London of Irish parents almost entirely without education and so poor that there was nothing for her to do but make her living by her hands, came to New York. Her heart went out to the poor she saw around her in the crowded tenement neighborhood in which she lived and above all to the sick poor with no one to care for them except their own people who had neither the knowledge nor the time to give them such care as they absolutely needed. Single handed out of the greatness of her heart, she tried to solve this enormous problem which with the condition of our hospitals at that time when the poor dreaded them and hated to go to them almost worse than going to the poorhouse, was ever so much than it is at the present time, although the Lord knows it is bad enough even in our day. Having nothing else to give she gave herself to the solution of the problem and strange as it may seem succeeded in working wonders though not without the most serious discouragement and with utter failure staring her in the face over and over again.

She had to work hard with her hands to support herself and whatever there was over she employed for the benefit of the sick poor whom she nursed and cared for to the best of their ability and out of the affection of her heart. It was hard, hard work, veritable slavery, but in a great cause and nothing could discourage her. Strange as it may seem young women gathered around her and asked to be allowed to help her in the work and to share

the joys and sorrows of her absolute devotion to others. There was a full quarter of a century of struggle before the day of at least comparative success dawned and then in spite of all the hard work of her lifetime she was afforded the opportunity to see some of her dreams come true and an institution founded that promised to make them realities for the future.

When she came to die at an age well beyond seventy her work was known by a great many people and its significance thoroughly appreciated. Prominent churchmen and a number of successful business men interested in the condition of the poor in New York gathered at her funeral. She had in her later years come to be looked upon as a saintly character whose friendship it was a privilege to have while the opportunity to help her in her good work was considered to be one of the precious chances that make life worth while. Her work was so organized by this time that it promises to go on in ever widening circles of good for the poor not only of New York City but of many other cities in the country. The little pebble of charity that she dropped into the pool of life among the poor has had an effect much wider than she foresaw in her fondest dreams and there seems no end now to the increasing good that it may do. Nothing illustrates so well as her life that principle of Aristotle that good is diffusive. She well deserves a place among these Splendid Sisters. [J.J.W.]

The death of Mother Mary Walsh, on November 8, 1922, removed from the American Church a woman who by her example of Catholic charity did more to counteract the errors of philanthropists and professional social reformers than could a library of apologetical works. The crowds that pressed around her bier proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that she had struck deep root in the hearts of a grateful and appreciative people. Her



life story reads like a page from the annals of the early Church.

Born in London in 1850, Mary Walsh came to America at the age of twenty, and soon was swallowed up in the tenement districts of New York's East Side. With little education and few worldly possessions, she yet managed to find her way to the hearts of the poor by her ardent faith and boundless charity. Although she never failed to lend a helping hand wherever there was need of it, her tender heart was especially touched by the sad condition of the sick poor, and almost at once she resolved to make their relief her life work.

Having entered the secular Third Order of St. Dominic, she succeeded in gathering around her three or four other women who, like herself, desired to consecrate their lives to the service of Christ's poor. Living in a little two-room apartment, bare of even the most necessary furnishings—for a long time their only beds were pallets of straw laid on the floor—these pious Tertiaries went out scrubbing by day in order to gather sufficient funds with which to carry on their charitable ministrations amongst the sick at night. That their patients might be provided with nourishing food and the necessary medicines, they practiced heroic self-denial, often subsisting for days together on bread and water only.

For a time they conducted a laundry in which a dozen or more poor women found employment. This was eventually abandoned, partly because the health of some of the Tertiaries suffered from the hard labor, but principally because it interfered with the more important work of nursing the sick and caring for orphan children, which they were carrying on unostentatiously in the Paulist parish, under the direction of the Rev. A. R. Nevins, C.S.P. The embryonic institute suffered a severe loss in Father Nevins' death, in 1899, and since none remained

but Mother Mary and Sister Teresa—a patient sufferer from spinal meningitis, who left behind her the sweet odor of a holy life—it seemed doomed to an early death.

The Rev. P. J. O'Callaghan, however, who was appointed to succeed Father Nevins, realizing the value of the work that was being performed in the parish by these devoted women, resolved to obtain for them the financial aid which would enable them not only to continue it, but to carry it on more efficiently. With this end in view, he founded a lay association called "The Helpers of the Sick Poor." This name, being similar to Mother Pelletier's "Helpers of the Holy Souls," was afterwards changed to "The Friends of the Sick Poor." Later on, in 1904, the Society of the Immaculate Conception was formed by gentlemen who had become interested in the welfare of the Sisters. The purchase of property on Sixty-fifth Street to serve as a center for these charitable workers was the first step taken by the society. Subsequently, through the generosity of an anonymous friend, the present mother house at 140 West Sixty-first Street was secured. About the same time the Rev. John T. McNicholas, O.P., now Archbishop of Cincinnati became interested in the work of the Sisters, and with the approval of the Rev. Thomas Esser, O.P., Secretary of the Congregation of the Index, Rome, secured the services of one of the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary's of the Springs, Columbus, Ohio, to instruct the rising community in the spirit and traditions of the Dominican Order. The Master General, the Very Rev. Hyacinth Cormier, O.P., in 1910, issued the diploma affiliating the new branch with the Order of Friars Preachers. A formal novitiate was opened, and soon vocations began to pour in. As a consequence, in 1912, at the request of Bishop Hartley, a foundation was made in Columbus, Ohio. A second foundation in New York City dates

from 1917. Another was made just before Mother Mary's death at Denver, Colo., whilst Duluth and Cincinnati are eagerly looking forward to the coming of the Sisters. In 1918 a farm at Lakewood, New Jersey, was given over to the Sisters by a generous benefactor, where sickly children and convalescent mothers are taken for summer outings. Sometimes as many as four hundred are entertained there in a single season. In 1921 another benefactor offered his summer home at Hampton Bays, Long Island, to serve as a rest-house for the Sisters when worn out by their arduous labors.

The Dominican Sisters of the Sick Poor devote themselves exclusively to the care of the indigent poor in their own homes. They refuse absolutely to take any remuneration, or even refreshment, other than a glass of water. They carry their own food to the homes of the poor. No distinction is made as to race, religion or color. There is just one thing that can lure them from their convent retreat, and that is the cry of those who are too ill or too poor to help themselves. After a hard day's grind in the homes of the destitute, the Sisters always return to their convent for the spiritual exercises of the religious life.

The ideals of this generous hearted congregation came from the big heart of Mother Mary. A woman of simple faith and unostentatious piety, guided in everything by a spirit of broad charity and helpfulness, she was just the person to fire in the hearts of the magnanimous a desire to lift service to the poor out of the slush of professionalism. From her contact with the poor, she knew well that they could not withstand the impact of a charity untainted by earthly motives. Realizing that many of the needy turn against God because they have lost their hold on religion, and perhaps through their own fault and sinfulness have shut off the living current of grace and light, she tried always and everywhere in her own quiet way to ac-

centuate the real spirit of that religion which teaches that "God is Charity." I have heard her tell how, sometimes, she would get down on her knees to pray beside the bed of some suffering unbeliever; or, again, how she would sometimes take another Sister with her, that together they might recite the Rosary, and so exemplify the true meaning and beauty of that devotion. In the same spirit she insisted that her Sisters wear the religious habit, when many urged her in the beginning to discard it, thinking that it might prevent free access to unfriendly homes. She never tired of saying that the poor above all needed religion and its faithful practice to make their lot bearable. But this must not be misunderstood. There is a theory which regards religion as an anaesthetic. That is not a Catholic theory. To Catholics, religion is not a stupefying drug. It does not exempt from pain and suffering, but for both it gives a satisfying explanation. Who would not exchange suffering in time for happiness in eternity?

In her early years Mother Mary enjoyed splendid health, but gradually it was undermined by her hard work, her advancing years and her untiring devotion to the poor. Two or three times during her later years she found it necessary to suspend her activities temporarily. But she was never so miserable as when forced by the order of her physician to remain idle. It was about the only time that one found her out of sorts. For if there was one thing characteristic of her, it was her unfailing good humor and her irrepressible Irish wit and humor. She never lost confidence in human nature. She always knew how to turn the sorriest conspiracy of events into a joke. If men stood in her way as she went about doing good, she laid them low by her infectious laughter, her simple directness and her winning good nature. Her fund of common sense was remarkable. She was never caught

unawares. She knew, as if by intuition, the workings of the human mind, especially amongst the poor. If at times she was brought in contact with those who tried to impose on her good nature, she knew how in her own way to win them for God.

After her death Mother Mary received honors which she had neither looked for nor coveted during her lifetime. All she craved was the affection of the poor, and this she received in abundant measure. She has left behind her the aroma of a life of most magnanimous self-sacrifice, and has ensouled a goodly generation of her daughters with the ambition to spend themselves, and to be spent, for the sake of the poor.

At the time of Mother Mary's death there were nearly half a hundred women, most of them young, all of them with devoted youthful hearts, in the little community which in spite of her humility might almost be said to have organized itself around her for the furtherance and the continuance of her work. Now nearly five years later there are more than three score of them and there seems every reason to think that the little community will continue to grow in the way that it has been doing particularly during this past fifteen years since it was affiliated with the Dominicans. Its great patroness is Catherine of Siena, that immortal charity worker, who more deeply influenced her century than any other individual who lived in it. It is her work that has been reincarnated in these Dominican Sisters of the Sick Poor at the beginning of the twentieth century. Catherine owed almost nothing to education and did not know how to read until she was twenty-five nor to write until she was twenty-seven, but she had an indomitable spirit and a great heart and in her humble way Mother Mary of New York represents the power that that combination of greatness of heart and devotion of spirit can accomplish for mankind.



# Mother Alphonsa Lathrop

*"Rose of all the Hawthornes"*

By JAMES J. WALSH

IT seems only fitting in the scheme of things that the daughter of the man to whom the problem of evil as it is in the world had appealed as the greatest of mysteries and yet somehow containing in itself the greatest of consolations, should have devoted the better part of a long life to the assuaging of the sufferings of the greatest of physical evils under which humanity labors. Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, daughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne, "the Rose of all the Hawthornes," the widow of George Parsons Lathrop, the writer, gave her widowhood to the care of the poor suffering from cancer. Probably over a hundred thousand people died of cancer in this country last year and there were nearly half a million of people who suffered from it. Nearly a million of people died throughout the civilized world and instead of decreasing as might be expected with the progress of modern medicine, cancer is on the increase. It is not unlikely that at the present moment some five millions of the human race are sufferers from this disease. Every year after forty makes us just that much more likely to die of cancer. Surely it needed the heart of a Hawthorne to think that one could do anything to relieve humanity in the midst of such an ill but that was what Mother Alphonsa Hawthorne Lathrop had spent nearly thirty years in doing.

Surely it was appropriate that her own death came so quietly that she seems scarcely to have known of it until it was past. She who had seen death come so in-

exorably and so pitilessly during the past thirty years to many hundreds of her cancer patients, was found after the convent bell for rising still warm, a smile on her face, but dead. She had for some time been feeling very well after having not been so well for months and she declared only a day or two before her death that she had not felt better for years. She was intensely happy in the thought that in spite of her seventy-five years she was still able to give her personal attention to the care of her beloved cancer patients. Her presence among them in the country home at Hawthorne until the very last day of her life had proved a benediction and a consolation.

With Mother Alphonsa's death there passed from us one of the great souls of this generation who had devoted herself whole-heartedly to others, forgetful of herself. Her work is so well organized that it will go on and spread and continue so long as the cancer scourge lasts to be one factor for the mitigation of this greatest of human physical evils. Here is one who deserves amply a place among these Splendid Sisters.

Not many knew of her magnificent work, for, like all supremely good work, it was carried on with a characteristic quietness. It attracted very little attention because it was concerned with the disturbing problem of cancer. The public does not like to hear much about cancer. Yet at the beginning of the present year, the United States Public Health Reports announced that the increase of the disease and its fatality were absolute, and not merely relative to the greater number of people, nor even to the fact that our progress in sanitation has enabled ever so many more people to live on to the cancer age. We know that many people die of cancer, but the effect upon the public is very like that French view of mankind's attitude toward death: "People die"—a shrug of the shoul-

ders—"Oh, yes; other people." Most of us prefer to put the consideration of cancer aside and not to read much about it, and anything concerning it is likely to be shunted aside and relegated to the background. We are more than a little ostrich-like in our attitude toward some of the serious diseases of mankind.

It is not surprising that, under the circumstances, Mother Alphonsa had to struggle (sometimes almost hopelessly) in order to continue her work of caring for the poor, suffering from incurable cancer. It took many years to attract the practical attention necessary to insure permanency to her work. Recently, though the struggle to secure its proper development had to be kept up assiduously, recognition came. Many people began to feel that they wanted to help Mother Alphonsa in the wonderful task she was accomplishing. Something of her own suppression of self in connection with her work may be gathered from the fact that when, a few months ago, a committee from the New York Rotary Club went to Hawthorne to present her with a medal for outstanding work in charity, she allowed herself for the first time to be photographed in her habit as a nun. Considering her position as the daughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne, and the place she deservedly came to occupy in the affections of many, this is a record in our publicity-seeking age. Only the assurance that this notoriety might enable her to be of greater help to sufferers from cancer induced her to yield to the solicitations of the photographer.

Mother Alphonsa's life work began nearly thirty years ago when her soul, looking upon suffering humanity from the eyes of the "Rose of all the Hawthornes," found one class among the poor in New York more in need of help than any other. They were those suffering from incurable cancer. Frequently operated upon in the hospitals, sometimes more than once, they could not be kept

there because hospitals are for those who can be benefited by medical or surgical treatment, and not refuges for those for whom nothing further can be done. Such patients must either be cared for in their tenement homes, or find their way to the hospital for the dependent poor. In their homes, frequently alone during the day when members of their family are out at work, their care becomes an added burden in already difficult circumstances. Many of them have the deepest reluctance toward ending life among the dependent poor. There has been a prejudice, inherited from preceding generations when it was too well deserved, against such institutions.

Mrs. Lathrop, later to become Mother Alphonsa, recognized in such cases a set of patients eminently deserving of sympathy, and yet so situated that it was extremely difficult to care for them in such a way as to make life reasonably bearable. She took up the solution of the problem very seriously but very simply. Renting an apartment on the lower East Side of New York City, she proceeded to care for as many patients as could be accommodated. She had not been long at the work before a young woman from Kentucky (Mother Rose, as she came to be in religion, and who has been her colleague ever since) asked to be allowed to help her. At first they cared for half a dozen patients, leaving very little room in the apartment for themselves. Then they took another apartment and increased the number to a dozen, finally renting a house and filling almost every available space with the sick. Upon the death of her husband, Mrs. Lathrop realized that the surest way to secure permanence to the work, would be the foundation of a religious order. In accordance with this idea she obtained an affiliation with the Third Order of Saint Dominic, and inaugurated the Sister Servants for the Relief of Incurable Cancer.

Gradually friends gathered round her, and she was able to build the hospital of Saint Rose's Free Home for Incurable Cancer at 71 Jackson Street. This institution was capable of accommodating one hundred patients. By this time other young women had joined her little community, vowing a life service to the care of the cancerous poor. The city home was beautifully situated opposite a park in view of the East River, but as some of the cancer patients lived for several years after their admission, there was need of a place in the country. This was purchased in Westchester County, and called Hawthorne.

There were just two requirements for admission to these homes. The first was that the applicant should be a sufferer from cancer declared by physicians to be incurable. The second was that the applicant should be poor. Patients who could pay were not taken, for these could find other institutions to care for them, and Mother Alphonsa preferred to reserve her homes entirely for those without means. In them no distinction of race or creed was made.

It might be expected that places sheltering only patients suffering from incurable cancer would be rather gloomy. But those who visited Mother Alphonsa's homes were not likely to think so. The inmates were usually cheerful, at times even happy, and sympathetic toward one another. There laughter was heard as often as in any hospital, and oftener than in factories or workshops. For this condition the Sisters, and above all, Mother Alphonsa, with her happy yet serious disposition, were very largely responsible.

Every cancer patient knows from experience that from the time of the first serious symptom of the disease which so often means a fatal termination, more than one friend, in perfectly good health at that time, will meet death first. Mother Alphonsa's cancer patients learned to face the in-



evitable without great unhappiness, and pain being relieved and diversion of mind afforded, they enjoyed intervals of peace.

Mother Alphonsa's death leaves a well-organized little community of Servants of Relief. There are over thirty women who have vowed themselves to this work and who will carry it on. There is ample need for it. Cancer, as we have said, is increasing—not decreasing. Nearly a hundred thousand people died of cancer in the United States last year; and while the disease makes no distinction between rich and poor, there are so many more of the latter that there are numbers in all our large cities in need of such help as is afforded by Mother Alphonsa's homes. It was her dream that the future would see other homes for these patients established in many places. They are sadly needed.

Every now and then an announcement is made that the cause of cancer has been discovered, and hopes arise that some treatment for it will be found. Inevitably, disappointment has followed these announcements. The London Bureau of Cancer Research announced the other day that practically nothing was being done throughout the world seeming to justify the hope that the cause of cancer would be discovered. An English statement made last year seemed very hopeful for a time, but has proved unfounded. The cause, and with it the successful treatment of cancer, of course, may be found at any time, yet in spite of the most painstaking research during the past twenty-five years which at times seemed promising, we are no nearer the heart of the problem than we were at the beginning of the century. The impression is growing that cancer represents one of the terminal stages of existence, an insurrection in the body-cells against the vital control which has kept them in coördination. It is possible that this insurrection may be the result of some

specific irritation, but there is nothing to indicate that we shall be able to check it for another generation at least.

In the meantime, Mother Alphonsa's work, organized so well during her life, remains. There seems every reason to believe that she initiated one of those enduringly beneficent foundations which for generations will continue to diffuse good—for, as Aristotle said, "good is ever diffusive of itself." Her memory will indeed be held in benediction, not alone for generations but for centuries, since her heart beat high for humanity and devoted itself to making life bearable for those who were neglected and in great distress.

### *Twenty-five Years Among New York's Cancerous Poor*

By H. A. GILLIS

A narrow dirty street, its countless pushcarts and vender's stands crowding one another in their efforts to attract the attention of the public—the street where gunmen's fights, murders and suicides were everyday occurrences—where it was almost impossible for decent, law-abiding citizens to pass in safety, and where little children eked out their few hours' play in the gutters for want of clean breathing space—Cherry Street, a quarter of a century ago.

Here, surrounded by all that was vile, where poverty and crime brought upon the heart of New York's slum district, the ills and disease bred of filth, was founded the tiniest clinic in the great city, a clinic that had its birth in little hall rooms, presided over by two carefully nurtured, cultured, traveled women, renowned in the world of art and letters. To-day that clinic is a cancer hospital of international fame with quarters in New York City

and in Hawthorne, New York, a suburban town in the Westchester hills, about twenty miles from Broadway and 42d Street. Each of the institutions is presided over by the original founders, and each has under her jurisdiction a staff of nursing sisters—and the full coöperation of some of the greatest cancer specialists in the medical world.

Within the past few weeks both women—now Mother Alphonsa and Mother Rose—celebrated the silver jubilee of their acceptance into the Dominican Order. Simultaneously was commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the home.

No longer is the clinic housed on Cherry Street. Grown to true hospital size it is now located at 71 Jackson Street, with Mother Rose in charge of the institution which still retains its original name of St. Rose's Free Home for Cancer Incurables. Mother Rose was, before her entry into the world of the religious, Miss Alice Huber, daughter of one of the most prominent Catholic families of Louisville, Kentucky, an artist of ability.

Up in Westchester County a great, rambling old frame building shelters many scores of the city's cancerous poor. Instead of the dingy little quarters of Cherry Street with its gloomy outlook, its tiny rooms with windows through which the sunlight barely filtered, the patients now have at their disposal wide, open verandas, hundreds of windows afford plenty of light and sunshine, and great spreading lawns with huge shade trees offer real luxury of life in the open before the Grim Reaper claims his own.

Here Mother Alphonsa administers to the wants of the afflicted. And here, under her able administration, will soon be built one of the finest stone and steel institutions in the country—an institution that will be thoroughly modern in every detail, its existence made possible through the voluntary contributions of the public.

Mother Alphonsa was, before entering the order, Mrs. Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, youngest daughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne, noted American author.

Cherry Street, too, has changed. True, it is still in the heart of New York's slums, but—police protection has done much to clear the district of its reputation as the lair of the gangster. Murders and suicides are comparatively few and far between. Gone are the street venders, and changed indeed are the living quarters, windows and a fair degree of sanitation making the tenements almost habitable. No longer is it necessary for the children to use the gutters for a playground offers both amusement and shelter to the youngsters, while countless settlement houses of many denominations provide nurseries and kindergartens for the babies and relaxation and educational and amusement facilities for adolescents and care-worn parents.

The story of the founding of the cancer home and of the two women who have devoted the past twenty-five years of their life to the care of the incurably sick reads as fiction culled from the brain of some great novelist. It seems as though Mother Alphonsa herself must have lived in the books of those great authors and poets, the friends of her parents during her childhood, such notables, for instance, as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Gladstone, Tennyson, Browning and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Rose Hawthorne was the youngest of three children, Una, Julian and baby "Rosebud" as the family lovingly termed the child. Much of her early life was spent in Europe, and, although the daughter of parents who professed no especial creed, evinced, when but seven years old, a precocious interest in things pertaining to the Catholic religion. So marked was this that her mother placed at the head of the child's bed a picture of the Madonna.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, both as a writer and as a representative American, was welcomed, and sought after by statesmen, literary people and ranking personages of society both in this country and in Europe. His wife, a gentle, cultured lady made a fitting companion for the "lion of the hour." In such an environment, and with the advantages of education found by association with the educated, and by travel, the children of Nathaniel and Sophie Hawthorne grew to maturity, their talents developed, and whatever latent genius they possessed fostered under the watchful eyes of their parents.

Perhaps the strongest influence in the life of the young Rose was that unconsciously exerted by a serving maid in the employ of the family while in Rome, for times without number the girl marveled at the consolation which seemed to flood the soul of the humble maid as she knelt at the foot of her crucifix. When Rose was but a child she was received in audience by Pope Pius IX, and received the blessing of the Pontiff. So great an impression did the countenance of His Holiness make on the mind of the child that for years she carried with her a medallion of him.

The girl grew to womanhood, and, like her mother, married a writer of note, George Parsons Lathrop. To them a little son was born. Mrs. Lathrop's first real trial came with the death of her boy. Less than thirty years ago—one year before her husband's death—Mr. and Mrs. Lathrop were converted to Catholicism under the instruction of the Rev. Father Alfred Young, of the Paulist Congregation. Shortly after they were confirmed by Archbishop Corrigan in his private chapel.

All her life Rose Hawthorne Lathrop had dreaded the sight of blood. Indeed it is said that so marked as this horror that on many occasions she had been made positively ill when chance forced her to gaze at some wound.



Like a cloak this dread fell from her, and she seemed suddenly incensed with a desire to heal, to ameliorate illness. She had already achieved an enviable reputation as a writer of short stories. But now the time spent with the pen was to be turned to another purpose. She had resolved to devote her life to the sick.

What caused such a radical change no one will ever know, but before long the woman who had reared in luxury was immersed in the study of surgical cancer. From one who had so recently hated the mere sight of blood Mrs. Lathrop had suddenly undertaken the care of the poor sufferers of that dread disease for which science to date has found no cure.

Into her life had come a poor seamstress, a woman of refinement whose financial resources had dwindled in her fight against the disease. And on this woman Rose Lathrop lavished the first fruits of her study. Forsaken were the literary lights with whom she had been wont to mingle, cast aside was the luxury of her home, and in its place the daughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne had established herself in a humble abode on Water Street, New York. She had made up her mind to divide her bread with the poorest of the poor; to consecrate her time and efforts to the nursing of their wounds. Yet she was hardly prepared for the task which she had voluntarily undertaken, for she was alone in an almost superhuman undertaking; her only resources were those which she herself was prepared to furnish, and her little family of sick was becoming larger by the day.

Just when things looked blackest and it appeared that her efforts were to count for naught a knock sounded at the door, and in response to her "Come in," Miss Alice Huber, of Louisville, appeared on the threshold. Instead of asking questions Miss Huber knelt and bandaged a bleeding wound. "I'll stay and help you," she said. Thus

was formulated and cemented a friendship which was to last through life, and thus was formed what is to-day the well-known Home for Cancer Incurables.

The two Servants of Relief nursed the homeless sick in their own little apartment, and, when not detained there by patients, also cared for their helpless neighbors.

One day a Dominican priest, in his efforts to personally thank the women for their efforts on behalf of a parish-ioner, visited the home of the two "Servants of Relief." Worse even than the Cherry Street "clinic," which was opened shortly after, was the dilapidated shack which sheltered the patients cared for by the "nurses."

At his suggestion the two women joined the Third Order of St. Dominic; they made their profession, took their vows, and donned the Dominican habit. Mrs. Lathrop became Mother Alphonsa; her associate Mother Rose. They moved to the Cherry Street quarters, and received permission to have Mass and to keep the Blessed Sacrament in their chapel. They were definitely affiliated with the Order of St. Dominic. Their home they called St. Rose's Free Home for Cancer Patients. And they started with five patients.

News of the work of the two Dominicans spread, and before long the number of their patients became so great that larger accommodations had to be provided. The site on Jackson Street was purchased and a model hospital erected. Then the branch at Hawthorne was added. To-day, there are one hundred and fifty patients.

The other day, when the silver jubilee was celebrated the two women renewed their vows for another twenty-five years; three novices were professed; one Sister took her final vows, and four others renewed theirs. Altogether now there are some thirty-five devoted Sister Servants of the Cancer Poor to continue Mother Alphonsa's work where it dropped from her dead hands.













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